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MOSS FROM A ROLLING STONE

MOSS FROM A ROLLING STONE

BY

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS

1924
LONDON & TORONTO
J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
NEW YORK E. P. DUTTON & CO.

Aug. 16, 1924
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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THE rolling stone gathers no moss, but during a long and varied career I have had many experiences and heard many yarns. Some of these have been collected in the present volume, and are herewith dedicated to the public, whose suffrages and indulgence I crave.

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS.

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MOSS FROM A ROLLING STONE

CHAPTER I

ANTENATAL

In the ordinary course of nature most people have had grandfathers; mine, however, James Hodgetts, was somewhat of a legendary character. Few details of his life have been handed down to me by oral tradition. When he married my grandmother he was, besides being a scallywag, a cornet in the Guards. Wild and irresponsible, he got into debt, was disowned by his people who lived in Worcestershire, sold out and embarked in business, of which he was making a success, when he died under an operation, leaving a disconsolate widow and an infant son. Very tall and very powerful, he is reputed to have been the strongest man in his regiment and to have been able to lift up with one hand a fully accoutred trooper seated on a chair.

During some riots in London, while walking in the street with my grandmother, he was threatened by a mob, but succeeded in forcing open some gates, and, after pushing his wife into the courtyard behind, closed the gates, and leaning against them, held them until the mob was dispersed.

A very beautiful woman, my grandmother was the daughter of a successful portrait-painter, May by name, who was in the habit of exhibiting at the Royal Academy, and whose grandfather had been an honarary freeman of the City of London. Two portraits by him of my grandfather and grandmother respectively are still in my possession. The former has rather a heavy and dark countenance with a look of determination,

and a somewhat fierce-tempered air. He was a man whom nothing could deter from his purpose when once he had made up his mind. When he asked for my grandmother's hand, her father, Mr. May, very properly refused his consent to the marriage, and forbade the young man the house. But this was not the way to discourage him. One evening he put a ladder to my grandmother's window and eloped with her. The couple were subsequently married in St. Giles's, Cripplegate, but my grandfather was far from being an exemplary husband. He was frequently in Paris, not always unaccompanied, but never by his wife. His domestic habits were also deplorable, and he used to come home at all hours of the night and morning. In order to put a stop to these distressing irregularities, my grandmother, who was a woman of high spirits and a mettlesome temper, after sitting up till nearly three o'clock, one morning, locked and bolted the front door and went to bed. Coming home shortly afterwards, and finding the front door closed, my grandfather, nothing daunted, succeeded in climbing over the area railings up into a balcony and effecting an entrance through a window; but this performance had been perceived in the distance by one of the venerable night-watchmen to whose custody the streets were in those days at night confided. With commendable zeal this vigilant Dogberry swung his rattle, and, rushing up to the house, began to play a regular tattoo on the front door with the knocker. There was barely time for my grandfather to put on a night-cap, and draw a night-shirt over his shoulders, light a candle, open the window, put his head out and inquire what all that infernal row was about, before there was a perfect crowd of watchmen in front of his house. On being told that a burglar had just climbed in, my grandfather asked the watchman to come and help him to search the premises. A posse of watchmen remained outside to prevent the intruder from escaping, and the premises were then carefully explored from attic to cellar. As no burglar could be

found my grandfather began to simulate most realistically a violent rage for having had himself and his household thus frivolously disturbed in their sleep, and the crest-fallen watchmen had to disperse.

I was told that he got even with the watchman though, for, catching him asleep in his box one morning, he, being as I have said, a very powerful man, deftly lifted it up and turned it upside down, having previously carefully secured the door. He then ran away, and history does not relate how long it was before the poor old watchman was released from his uncomfortable position.

There is also a legend that my grandfather was one of the mounted escort of gentlemen at Queen Caroline's funeral.

Life with such a man could never be monotonous, and I understand that his wife was in a state of perpetual anxiety and perplexity as to what might happen next. Nevertheless she cherished for his memory a romantic affection; he was her *idéal*, a typical *beau sabreur*.

When he suddenly died in the flower of his manhood, they had been wedded for less than ten years, and she, who had married in her teens, was a beautiful young woman, universally admired. She had but one small boy, and although a scallywag and disowned by his wealthy relations, my grandfather had not left her too badly off, besides her father was in comfortable circumstances. A cousin, or brother of hers, was interested in Bruce Castle, the school founded by Rowland Hill, and it was this relation or his son who was subsequently invited to Stockholm to take charge of the education of a future King of Sweden, I forget which, and there married and settled and died. I have this dignified old gentleman's portrait but am not quite clear what relation he was to me, although I met his daughters when they were on a visit to London in 1879. One was a very charming and cultivated woman, with unmistakably Swedish manners, very courteous, though somewhat

reserved and distant, but extremely interesting and full of stories of court life in Stockholm, which I regret to say I have quite forgotten. But the other was one of the fanatical sort. She was a total-abstainer and a vegetarian, and she carried her vegetarianism so far that she refused to make any use even of leather. On her feet she wore rubber goloshes, and though she had really beautiful features, very fine eyes, and remarkably well-shaped teeth, she dressed so eccentrically and was so intolerant of others that I was glad she took an obvious dislike to me.

Well, owing to the May connection with Bruce Castle, my father was sent to school there, and a few years later when Rowland Hill became a great person, made his celebrated conundrum: "Why is Sir Rowland Hill like the sun?" Answer: "Because he tips the little Hills with gold."

At Bruce Castle there was a very quiet modest and retiring young man, with a fine and thoughtful face and perfect manners; he was the science master, and already distinguished and soon to become a fellow of the Royal Society. A friend of Faraday's, he was the son of a man whose name was at that time a household word as that of the joint author with Britten of the learned and handsome voluminous publication: *The Beauties of England and Wales*, a complete set of which is one of the treasures of my library. Edward William Brayley, soon to become the greatest then living authority on the sun, fell deeply in love with my grandmother, who, on her side, was agreeably impressed by the contrast between this grave and gentle student, and the whirlwind impetuousness of my late grandfather. And so they got married, but I think she was quite as much disappointed in her second husband as she had been in her first, though for a different reason. Mr. Brayley never gave his wife a moment's anxiety; he always, and in every circumstance of life, behaved with propriety and dignity, and if he was not even remotely a man about town or a rake, he

cannot be described as altogether unworldly. I have been told by strangers who knew him that he dearly loved a lord, and his friends were all people of eminence, men like Sir William Grove,—whom I knew as a judge, and whose two sons were respectively a distinguished general and a brilliant playwright,—Sir Roderick I. Murchison, the personal friend of the Emperor Nicholas I., and the Mæcenas of the scientific world, Sir Henry de la Beche, the rough diamond of geology, Gassiott, who combined scientific pursuits with profitable dealings in port and sherry, Michael Faraday, the outstanding scientific giant of his generation, Luke Howard, the pioneer of meteorology, General Sir Edward Sabine, R.E., the Freshfields, Dr. Buckland, Sir Harry Verney, the friend of King Leopold of the Belgians and the brother-in-law of Florence Nightingale, and many others, last but not least of whom, in rank at any rate, being the Marquis of Northampton.

Mr. Brayley, whom I well remember, was correctness itself, always placid, always imperturbable, an early Victorian to the finger tips. In the 'sixties when I saw him he still wore a black satin stock, beautifully pleated shirts, a swallow-tailed coat, and spats, which were then called gaiters. He was a member of the Athenæum, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and Associate of the Institution of Civil Engineers, a Fellow of the Linnean and Geological Societies, and the corresponding member of innumerable foreign learned bodies; a kindly man withal, enjoying his ponderous jokes, gentle as a child. My grandmother was fond of society, but did not, I think, take a great interest in the learned fossils her husband cultivated, and although she was glad Mr. Brayley gave her so little cause for uneasiness, I am afraid that he bored her somewhat. If he had had but one harmless pinch of wickedness in him, I am sure she would have found him much more entertaining. As it was, while Mr. Brayley frequented learned societies, she read novels, and she read so many novels, that she ended by living

in an unreal world of romance, to the detriment of her home and her domestic duties. I still have a vision of her, always in black silk, and a lace cap, with beautiful ringlets, a majestic face, somewhat sad and wistful. At that time she had become a confirmed invalid, and her sister kept house for Mr. Brayley, who, by the way, had a library of 10,000 volumes.

I believe I am not exaggerating when I say that many men of science of world-wide reputation owed the success they attained to the unselfish assistance of Mr. Brayley, whose industry and capacity for work was prodigious. Besides being editor of *Taylor's Philosophical Journal*, he was a contributor to most of the learned publications of the day and virtually ran the London Institution. He was, moreover, an ardent Swedenborgian and devoted his Sunday afternoons to writing for the *Intellectual Repository* and similar journals.

As a boy my father was naturally greatly influenced by this thoughtful scientist, who frequently took him to the conversaziones of the Royal Society. Here my father once met the Duke of Wellington, and was presented to him, the Iron Duke graciously extending two fingers to be shaken. He retained a lively recollection of the Duke's famous dry laugh, a "ha, ha," that was something unforgettable. Of these meetings of the Royal Society my father had many quaint stories to tell. In those days evening dress was not so universal, especially in scientific circles, as it has become, and on one occasion he remembered Sir Henry de la Beche, who always wore a dirty rabbit-skin waistcoat, addressing a superlatively attired exquisite with the gruff remark: "Anybody can see what frivolous society you frequent": whereupon the ornately arrayed one produced an invitation card, and, handing it to Sir Henry, retorted with an ineffable smile: "I hope not—Sir Robert Peel!"

John Edward Gray, the zoologist, who was rather uncertain of his h's, was a pet aversion of Sir Henry de la Beche's, and

one evening, as he was announced, Sir Henry stooped down and muttered into my father's ear: "Osses is of warous colours but hasses is halways Gray."

In those days puns were considered the essence of wit, and the Marquis of Northampton should not therefore be too severely judged for asking why Jenny Lind was like a good mutton-chop? "Because," he said, on my father's giving it up, "she is neither Grisi (greasy) nor yet Alboni (all boney)."

In those days Huxley and Tyndall were spoken of as two rather promising young men.

Mr. Luke Howard, the reputed father of the science of meteorology, was extraordinarily absent-minded and had strange lapses of memory. One day, calling on Sir Roderick Murchison, who by the way was a three-bottle man, he completely forgot whom to ask for. That did not matter, however, he could ask the flunkey whether his master was in, but on being told that he was out, and finding he had forgotten his card-case, he discovered to his dismay that he could not remember his own name, and retreated discomfited, while the flunkey stood at the open door watching his retreating figure with suspicion. At that moment Mr. Brayley happened to be coming round the corner. "Hullo, Howard," he exclaimed. "That's it," he cried, "thanks so much, my dear fellow, so much obliged to you!" and he rushed back to the still astounded flunkey and told him his name.

I had once a similar though not quite so ridiculous experience myself. At a dance I was taking a lady down to supper. Whilst we were still at the top of the stairs she saw a man about to ascend them and asked me whether I knew him and would I introduce him to her? I lost no time in making the two acquainted. As we continued our journey to the dining-room my partner reproached me for having performed my office so indistinctly that she had not caught my friend's name!

"I am not surprised," I said, "because, to tell you the truth I had forgotten it." "But," she retorted, "you pronounced my own name quite as indistinctly." Here was a nice mess, for, as a matter of fact, I had forgotten that too!

It was Mr. Luke Howard who carried an umbrella bearing on a silver band the legend: "This umbrella is stolen from Luke Howard."

In such surroundings my father grew up. It was not a very healthy atmosphere. His mother, a disappointed woman, dissatisfied with her life, and trying to find in the world of fiction the happiness which her home failed to offer, a *malade imaginaire* whose disease was incurable, cursed moreover with an uncontrollable temper. His step-father, who was all kindness and gentleness, was immersed in his work, in which no doubt he sought and obtained solace for the domestic discomforts which, it is to be feared, his wife but too frequently prepared him. In their circle there was but little young society. With the exception of John Oxenford,—the famous author of *Twice Killed*, which was translated into every language, and was even made into a French comic opera under the title of *Bonjour, Monsieur Pantalon*, which Oxenford had to re-translate into English!—and the Charlesworths, a descendant of one of whom was many years later to cause her relations much grief by becoming a "Salvation lassie" and marrying the son of "General" Booth, there seemed to have been very few young people about the house. The social events appear to have been connected chiefly with learned societies, where my father, who must have been a precocious and somewhat flippant youth, was rather spoilt and petted by the grave and reverend signors who were the ornaments of the learned world. Of one of his most flagrant flippancies he even boasted. A number of eminent zoologists (biologists they would be called to-day), were discussing with Mr. Brayley the curious fact, which had just been brought to light, that the African lion had a kind of nail in his

tail, and were speculating as to its probable use, when my father, a pert and forward boy, suggested that the lion no doubt picked his teeth with it. He also perpetrated vile puns. Sir William Tite, the famous City architect, was a friend of the house, and my father asked how his death would affect the health of Lady Tite. "She would lose her 'appy Tite," was the answer!

He was not wholly frivolous, however, but took an extraordinary interest in a variety of subjects, not usually attractive to a boy. Among these were languages, for which he had a gift, learning French, German and even Swedish by way of relaxation. When he left Bruce Castle he went to King's College for some time, and even got a medal for something or other, Latin I think. Yet he found time to translate a German work on electricity into English, and to help Sir Samuel Meyrick to arrange the arms and armour in the Tower. His knowledge of costume attracted the attention of Sir Francis Palgrave and, generally speaking, he was shaping straight for a literary career, when his health broke down, and he was sent to Cornwall to recuperate. Here he spent his days sailing a small yacht, and was suddenly bitten with a desire to go to sea. Unfortunately he had passed the age for the Royal Navy, but Mr. Brayley had friends on the Board of the East India Company, and through them secured for his stepson a nomination. I think those Indian days were the happiest in my father's life. He enjoyed the climate and began to study Sanskrit and Brahminism, the profound philosophy of which appealed to him, more especially as, so he always maintained, the study of Swedenborg had given him the key to the ancient mythologies. Here, at a bookseller's, I am speaking of Bombay, he also came across a strange parcel of books in an undecipherable character and, after minute search, discovered a thin pamphlet, which turned out to be a Russian grammar; further search resulted in the finding of a dictionary, and so he set to work

to teach himself Russian, an accomplishment which was in later years to stand him in good stead.

Life in Bombay, by his accounts, must have been very pleasant in those John Company days. Admiral Sir Henry Leake was Commander-in-Chief, and as my father was newly joined and had not yet got a ship, his principal duties consisted in dancing attendance on the admiral's charming daughters, and acting as a sort of aide-de-camp to his chief.

Greatly respecting the Hindoo character, enjoying the climate, and being with a lot of jolly young fellows of his own age, of whom one, a certain Cattley, seems to have been his particular chum, he was nevertheless anxious to get afloat, and presently he was put on a brig commanded by a fiery little officer called Bibby. Bibby was an old salt of a school that has passed away. He was very short, very dapper, and had enormously bushy whiskers, so huge and thick that he was said to grow his own mattresses. He was very particular about his clothes, especially his trousers, which he used to cut out himself and then had sewn-up by his sailmakers. He had a violently inflammable temper, and when he was put out, as he himself used to say, it was safer to jump overboard than to remain too near him. He was called Dictionary Bibby, and the reason for this sobriquet was the following:

On one cruise he had for his first lieutenant a very tall and very pious officer, Martin by name, the son of an Admiral Martin with whom poor Bibby had had a little unpleasant episode to which I shall presently refer. Well, this first lieutenant had a very strong objection to swearing, and was particularly strict with the "young gentlemen," who were perhaps not quite so circumspect in their language as the governess of an early Victorian ladies' school might have wished. The officers of the watch were in holy terror of this first lieutenant, and on one occasion, when a clumsy boy spilt some hot pitch on the quarter-deck as he was carrying it along, the officer of

the watch in a fit of uncontrollable rage, knowing what a martinet Bibby was, seized the boy by the throat, shook his fist in his face, and was just going to pour forth a volley of edifying expletives, when he suddenly remembered Martin, and, letting the boy go, contented himself with muttering under his breath: "God bless you! You know what I mean."

On the second day of the cruise, while little Captain Bibby was stamping up and down the quarter-deck in his usual peppery way, up came to him the tall and ascetic Martin, and saluting, began to report on the reprehensible language which the "young gentlemen" had been using the night before. Bibby listened attentively, but his chest kept swelling and his face grew redder and redder, at last he could contain himself no longer and he exploded with an indignant: "Fiddle-de-dee, sir!"

Lieutenant Martin drew himself up to his full height.

"I must beg of you, sir, to explain. I come to you, as first lieutenant of this ship and responsible for its discipline, to report a gross breach of the same, and you answer me with 'fiddle-de-dee'; really, sir, I must ask you what you mean by 'fiddle-de-dee, sir.'"

By this time Captain Bibby's face was the colour of a turkey-carpet. He jumped up, and, glaring at Martin, shouted:

"Do you want to know what I mean by 'fiddle-de-dee,' sir?" and then emphasising every word by striking his left palm with his right fist and stamping his foot, he continued: "I mean 'fiddle-de-dee, de-dee, de-*damn*-dee, sir!'" and the first lieutenant retired defeated.

That is why Captain Bibby was called "Dictionary Bibby." The reason why Captain Bibby did not like Admiral Martin is another story.

On one occasion Captain Bibby and his brig formed part of a cruising squadron under the command of Commodore Martin, as he then was. The squadron was caught in a squall. When the lull came, Captain Bibby's brig was within hailing distance

of the flagship, and Commodore Martin, who was a devout and pious evangelical Christian gentleman, was shocked to hear the volley of oaths proceeding from Captain Bibby's quarter-deck, where that strenuous navigator was exhorting his men. Commodore Martin immediately summoned all the captains of his squadron to his ship, and read Captain Bibby a little sermon on the evils of using bad language. "Let me," said Commodore Martin, handing Captain Bibby a Testament, "give you a book which I am afraid you have not sufficiently read, and advise you to see what the Apostle Paul did under similar circumstances."

Captain Bibby saluted, put the Testament in his pocket and departed. Presently the tail of the gale came along and everybody was too busy with his own affairs to take much notice of others, but, when the storm had spent itself by the following morning, a strange sight met the gaze of Commodore Martin as he came on the quarter-deck. There was Captain Bibby's brig standing out of the water and gyrating round and round on her stern. Commodore Martin instantly sent a file of marines to bring Captain Bibby on board.

"Will you please explain the disgraceful position of your ship?" said Commodore Martin, looking as righteously indignant as only a Christian gentleman could.

"Looks rather rum, doesn't it?" Captain Bibby replied quite unconcernedly, "but I went by your printed orders, sir." "My printed orders, sir, what do you mean? Explain yourself, sir!" Commodore Martin retorted, in great indignation.

But Captain Bibby calmly pulled out his Testament and said. "Here they are. 'Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern and wished for day,' and, by God, I did wish for day when I had carried out those orders."

I am afraid my father was quite as irascible as Captain Bibby. When he came to be examined for promotion by three captains

he was asked what he would do if, when in command of a combined steam and sailing ship, the mainsail had got caught in one of the paddle-wheels; there were no screws in those days. So preposterous a situation annoyed my father, and he answered without a moment's hesitation: "I would kick the lubber overboard who got it there." He did not pass that time. Another candidate who had been asked the same question replied, very gently: "The best I could, what would you do?" and he got his step.

Subsequently my father served on the two scientific vessels of the H.E.I.C.S., the *Palinurus* and the *Burnouf*. He had bad luck with these; I believe they were both wrecked; at least, I know that he was twice shipwrecked. Of one of these experiences my father's graphic account remains graven in my memory. It seems that during a storm the ship struck a reef in Torres Straits so violently that she was broken in two, amidships, like matchwood, only the stern and the forecastle remaining out of water. Everybody took to the boats, including the captain. Only my father, the boatswain, and one or two old sailors together with one of the ship's cooks remained on the wreck, all the others endeavoured to save their lives in the boats, which, as my father had foreseen, were speedily swamped and capsised, not a single man being saved. In those days swimming was not insisted on in the service as it is to-day, indeed it was even discouraged, and my father, though always a lover of the sea, was never anything but an indifferent swimmer. In that storm, however, the finest swimmer would have been helpless. I have forgotten how long my father said he remained on this wreck, but I remember that they ran short of "salt-horse," and their biscuits got very low. However, they managed to shoot quite a lot of small green parrakeets, which the cook made into pies and which were very good eating. At last they were sighted by a merchantman and taken to Geelong, from whence they proceeded to Melbourne. Those were the

days of the gold-rush and the bushrangers, and my father later published his impressions and experiences in a boys' story called *Tom's Nugget* which, Australians have told me, gave a vivid and faithful picture of life in that continent at the time. It was well received, as indeed were most of my father's boys' stories. With pride have I listened to the praises of his works from men who have read them with pleasure in their boyhood. Only once did I hear disparaging remarks, and that was from dear old Henty, himself a boys' story writer, whose views were perhaps not absolutely impartial. Speaking of my father's stories I overheard him say: "I cannot understand how any self-respecting boy can read such twaddle!" But then, alas, authors are human, and there is such a thing as *jalousie de métier*.

As soon as my father got to Melbourne he drew a draft on London, and this was the first sign of life he gave. His people had heard of the loss of his ship with all hands, and had gone into mourning for him, when he was thus unexpectedly heard of "in the sweet old way."

He now obtained leave of absence and returned for a short time to London, where he found the spiritualistic movement in full swing. Having been brought up as a Swedenborgian by his stepfather he naturally had no belief in spiritualism, which he regarded with suspicion and scepticism to his dying day, nevertheless he had many strange experiences of this extraordinary cult which he was quite unable to explain. Thus for instance, he went to call one day on a widow lady, a Mrs. Adams, who had been a very beautiful woman and for whom he cherished an almost filial respect and devotion. Shown into the drawing-room he found this lady's two daughters seated at a round table which had a central gilded leg and a marble slab for a top. They had their hands on the table which was jumping and turning about in a most extraordinary fashion. My father, though not tall, was a very powerful young man, fresh from sea, with muscles of iron. The young ladies were thin slips

of girls whom he could easily have lifted up, one in each arm, and carried out of the room. When he saw the table dancing about in this ridiculous fashion, he told the young ladies that he did not believe in spirits being allowed to play such pranks, and he would soon stop the capers of that table if they would let him. They promptly dared him to do his worst, and so he instantly knelt down and held the gilt leg of the table in his iron grip, but, in spite of his most determined efforts, the leg kept revolving in his hands, yet so firmly did he hold it that the gilding came off on his palms.

On another occasion he went to a spiritualistic séance in company with a beautiful young lady, a Miss Fawcett, who in later years formed part of the colony at Mount Lebanon in which Laurence Oliphant was so disappointed. Miss Fawcett had lost her mother, and at the séance the medium stated that her mother's spirit was present. Miss Fawcett said that if her mother was really there would she hand her a rose out of a flower-vase at the other end of the room. Immediately a rose floated across from the vase to Miss Fawcett, who stretched out her hand and took it.

Miss Fawcett's father, by the way, who was a connection of my grandmother's, was a character. He had served in the army and had commanded a regiment, the 41st I think, and was known among the young people by the nickname of "Old Fireworks." He entertained a good deal in his house in Craven Hill, then a fashionable neighbourhood, and among the people who used to frequent his parties was Thackeray. It was a flunkey of Colonel Fawcett's who gave notice because he had been expected to eat cold meat and was not allowed the use of silver forks.

Colonel Fawcett's grandfather, Sir William Fawcett, had been adjutant-general to the forces in Ireland in the eighteenth century and was succeeded in that post by Sir Francis Calvert, the father of Sir Harry Verney, the latter living to be father

of the House of Commons and dying towards the close of the nineteenth century, in the 'nineties I think, at the good old age of 97, having but a few years before saved the life of his groom, whose horse had bolted, by riding after him and catching the bolting horse's bridle.

Colonel Fawcett was a gambler, but a lucky one, and won large tracts of land in Western Australia at the card table. But in spite of his good fortune at cards his temper was anything but equable. On one historic occasion Colonel Fawcett and his brother, Captain Fawcett, who had served under Collingwood and had been present at the battle of Trafalgar, were both put in the witness-box. The occasion had arisen out of the disputed bill of an architect, who had carried out more extensive work than, so Colonel Fawcett maintained, he had been authorised to do, and who brought an action to recover his very considerable fees.

After Colonel Fawcett had told his story in the witness-box, he was cross-examined and very quickly lost his temper, whereupon the judge gently remonstrated with him, but the gallant colonel turned fiercely and indignantly on the judge and exclaimed in a voice in which injured pride and violent rage were struggling for mastery: "He doubts my word, my lord! He doubts my word! I'll put a bullet through his body and make a hole in his skin that the devil himself shan't mend."

At this explosion the colonel was asked to stand down, and his breezy brother, the captain, entered the witness-box. Now Captain Fawcett, in common with many naval officers, was rather hard of hearing, and moreover somewhat impatient and snappish.

When his turn for cross-examination arrived, the prosecuting counsel could not make much of him, and there was some pretty sparring, at which the judge remarked that the captain seemed to be quite as pugnacious as his brother.

"What did he say?" asked Captain Fawcett of his counsel.

"He says, you are more pugnacious than your brother."

"Of course I am," the captain remarked, "got a medal for it."

When I saw Captain Fawcett in the early 'eighties he was not far removed from being a centenarian; time had mellowed him, and softened the asperities of his temper. His memory was failing and his deafness had increased. He liked to talk of the days of Collingwood, but there was something on his mind that he was always referring to, but which was yet shrouded in mystery, for he would sit silently brooding and suddenly look up and exclaim:

"And then he got up and walked straight overboard!—straight overboard—drowned!"

Who it was who behaved in this extraordinary way, and what the reason or provocation may have been, I have never been able to discover, but Captain Fawcett was constantly repeating those words with a half-frightened look on his face.

But to return to my father. He went back to India, was in the Burmese war where he even got a bit of a wound and attained the rank of commander when news reached him from home that caused him much anxiety. His stepfather had had severe financial losses, through a defaulting co-trustee, but worse still he had been induced to purchase some land in Yorkshire which was supposed to be over a coal seam, but the coal had not materialised. In this connection I may relate a curious instance of animal sagacity. There was a farm on this land, and the farmer had a field from which he was anxious to keep the sheep away, but in spite of all his precautions the sheep always got in. The field was well protected by a hedge round it, but at one spot where the hedge was somewhat thin the curved trunk, or more properly speaking, part of the trunk, of a tree had been placed across in a position which it was thought would effectually make that part of the hedge impassable. In order to solve the problem of how the sheep succeeded in gaining access to this field in spite of this, the

farmer decided to lie in wait and watch. At their usual time the sheep were seen to approach the field and then, to the amazement of the farmer, he beheld the bell-wether climb into the trunk, the hollowness of which he had overlooked, and land in the field at the other end, his example being followed by the whole flock. This remarkable performance gave the farmer a brain-wave; he placed the bent trunk of the tree with its convex side towards the field and the hollow ends outside of it. Next morning he again lay in wait to watch the effect of this ruse. Presently the sheep arrived as usual, and the bell-wether, in a perfectly routine fashion, climbed into the hollow trunk, followed by the others. But great was his surprise on climbing out to find himself back in the place he had come from. He shook his wise old head and scampered off and never again went near that field.

Having hitherto lived extravagantly, my father did not see his way to remain in India in reduced circumstances, but decided to leave the service and find some more lucrative occupation. He got a friendly doctor to certify that his health had suffered from the Indian climate and that he ought to return home. Unfortunately when he got back the Crimean War was in full blast, and on the strength of his study of Russian he offered his services to the British Admiralty where, however, he was told that if he was too delicate for the Indian climate neither was he strong enough for that of Russia. I believe the East India Company heard of my father's offer and they resented it also. However that may be, my father now found himself in an unenviable position, cut off from the career he loved, and without any other to embrace. He had acted with his usual impulsiveness, and now regretted his decision, but it was too late. He had several offers more or less tempting. That was the time of expeditions. Lady Franklin was fitting out expeditions to rescue her husband, Sir John, though it was generally believed that the only reason why Sir

John Franklin, whom Mr. Brayley knew well, had taken up arctic exploration was to escape from his wife. Then there was Speke, who knew my father and wanted him to accompany him to Africa. However, instead of anything so romantic, my father, through the influence of Bunsen, I think, but I am not certain, got an appointment as Instructor in Navigation and Seamanship to the newly created Naval Cadet School in Berlin. If Bunsen did not get him the appointment he at least gave him a number of letters of introduction to such lights as Alexander von Humboldt, Droysen and Ranke and several others. What more especially determined my father to accept this post was the circumstance that he had fallen in love, but had failed to obtain the consent of the lady's parents. Following the example of my grandfather, he dispensed with this formality, married her without it, and proceeded to Berlin. That is how it came about that I was born in the capital of the *Boches*.

CHAPTER II

PRUSSIA IN THE 'SIXTIES

BECAUSE a man is born in a stable he is not necessarily a horse, and my being born in Berlin of British parents did not involve the forfeiture of my birthright as an Englishman. On the contrary, the mere fact of my having passed my childhood and youth in foreign climes probably made me much more patriotic than I would perhaps have been had I spent my early years in my own country. England was held up to me as the ideal, it could do no wrong, and compared with the English, the members of all other races were but foreigners—barbarians. That view was best expressed to me many years afterwards by my father's old friend, Admiral Sir Reginald I. Macdonald, known among his intimates as "Rim." Speaking of "foreigners" one day, he told me in his emphatic, breezy, sailor-like manner: "Foreigners! Humph! The best thing you can say of a foreigner is that he is almost an Englishman!" Brought up in that frame of mind, the defects of foreign countries and their people were made plain to me, but I had no opportunity of seeing for myself the advantages of my own country; these I took on trust, and so my ideals sustained no rude shock. For with the exception of a short visit to the Brayleys I never had a chance of discovering independently what my country was really like; that came much later.

It is unnecessary to say that I was christened at the English church at the Palace of Monbijou in Berlin, but thereby hangs a tale. On these occasions it is usual for a boy to have two godfathers and one godmother. My father had consequently

arranged for two male sponsors to attend the christening; one was Mr. Gill, a churchwarden, the engineer to the Berlin Waterworks, a man greatly respected in the British colony of that capital. In later years, when Lord Odo Russell was our ambassador, it is recorded of the present Lord Ampthill, as a small boy, that one day as he left the church he asked his mother, indignantly: "Mamma, why did that waterworks man stare at me so hard during the service?" Mr. Gill, be it explained was a tall, cadaverous man with side-whiskers and very large, hard, glassy grey eyes. His wife was an Englishwoman who, having failed to master the rich guttural German, had yet partly forgotten her own vernacular, with the lamentable result that her conversation was not always easy to follow. Thus, on one occasion when a servant of hers had met with a mortal accident, she explained to a friend through her tears: "Oh! my dear! my cook ist caput gegangen!"

Mr. Gill and my godmother, duly put in their appearance for the auspicious event above referred to, but my second godfather, a secretary of the British Legation, had been prevented by an unexpected call on his services from coming. The ceremony was just about to be performed when a curious-looking individual with curly hair, a fair moustache, a small tuft on his chin and a distinctly Semitic cast of countenance approached my father and, in fluent English with a strong German accent, asked whether he might be permitted to have the honour to act as my second sponsor. His offer was gratefully accepted, and next day a silver cup and a case with a silver fork and spoon arrived from him at our flat. The stranger who had thus come to my rescue turned out to be a naturalised Englishman, Dr. Henry Strousberg by name, who was, not many years later, destined to become the railway king of Prussia. The British Embassy is now housed in the gorgeous palace which that one-time multi-millionaire had built for himself. I do not remember setting eyes on him again in Berlin. I was to

meet him under very different circumstances in Moscow, when my father took me to visit him in the prison, into which he had been thrown, for bribing the officials of a bank (which closed its doors in consequence) to advance him a large sum of money on the elusive security of some Roumanian railway stock. It was like visiting Napoleon at St. Helena, only infinitely more tragic; from adjoining cells could be heard the ribald songs of his fellow-prisoners. He had not yet been sentenced, but was awaiting his trial. Calm and disdainful of the noise around him, he discussed philosophy with my father, and well do I remember my suppressed indignation at his dictum that the English had produced no philosophers, and that the only philosophical contemporary nation was Germany.

Dr. Strousberg was really a genius. Before he became my godfather he had already made and lost a fortune, whereupon he fled to England where he supported himself by writing romances for the *Family Herald* and similar publications. As soon as his affairs permitted it he returned to Germany and was well on the way to making his second fortune when he assumed such grave responsibilities on my behalf. He was again caught in the great crash which followed the boom after the Franco-German War, and was hoping to make his third fortune, when, as he said, those stupid Russians put him in prison and prevented him from restoring his finances. That broke him. His indomitable spirit was not defeated and he made several plucky attempts at recovery, but his luck had turned and he died in reduced circumstances though far from poverty.

My earliest recollection of Berlin is seeing a rather flush-faced officer, clean shaven, in a military cap and with strange dreamy blue eyes, driving in an open carriage. That was Frederick William IV., the mad King of Prussia!

Of his successor, William I., I retain a much better and clearer picture in my mind. One impression especially is as

vivid to-day as though I had received it but recently. We lived in the Behren Strasse behind Unter den Linden, and not far from the royal palaces. I was doing what I had been forbidden to do, leaning out of the window, when I beheld walking from the direction of the palace, all by himself, dressed in full uniform with the plumes in his helmet waving as he walked, the fringes of his epaulets dancing, his breast covered with orders, the King, looking leonine, that is the only expression, and every inch a King. On that occasion there was a dignity and sternness in his countenance which added to his truly regal appearance. Much as his son, the Emperor Frederick, was admired, to my mind, although he certainly looked like a knight of the Middle Ages, he was wanting in that distinction and royal grace which characterised his father. I have seen the Emperor Frederick in plain clothes, looking like any ordinary middle-class person, but it is impossible to imagine William I. incognito, there was a royal dignity about him, that seemed to radiate from his countenance and illuminate it, moreover he always seemed natural, never acting a part, whilst his grandson, for instance, always suggested by his manner that he was playing to the gallery.

I frequently used to meet the old King in my walks in the Thiergarten and always received from him a kindly smile in answer to my salute, and, more often than not, he would blow me a kiss.

During the troubled times of 1848 when he thought it prudent to fly to England, it is said that he travelled as Herr Lehmann, and in consequence that patronymic stuck to him ever afterwards as a nickname, by which he was colloquially called in popular conversation. A story is told of a young soldier who was doing sentry-go for the first time of his life in the royal palace when the King came upon him unawares. In common with all royal personages, William I. had a great memory for faces, and on passing this sentry, who was a

remarkably fine and tall fellow, the King, not remembering to have seen him before, stopped and asked him his name.

"I am also called Lehmann," was the astonishing reply.

As I have said, of all the royal persons I have seen, and I have seen a great many, the old Emperor William, more especially before he had become Emperor and senile, was the most regal-looking. The Emperor Alexander II. of Russia, who was taller, ran him very hard, but he had not the joyousness of his uncle. Alexander II. had a kind, gentle, refined face, but there was a shade of melancholy in it, a look of disappointment, as of a man who had been disillusioned. He had an exquisite grace and dignity in his movements, combined with an unaffected simplicity of manner which endeared him to all who approached him. At a review this note of simplicity was particularly conspicuous. Surrounded by a staff of generals in green uniforms, scarlet trousers with gold stripes, helmets with white, red and blue plumes, thus looking absolutely resplendent, the Emperor, taller by a head than the tallest of his staff, would wear a black *képi* with black plumes and the plain black and gold uniform of the Engineers of the Guard, his father's favourite regiment. The contrast was striking.

But to return to Berlin. Another early memory of mine is going out with my nurse for a walk and turning out of the Behren Strasse into the Wilhelmstrasse, in which is situated the Foreign Office, and being beckoned by Herr von Loeper, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

"Is your papa at home?" he cried. "Then go back to him at once and tell him Lord Palmerston is dead."

To me at that time this meant nothing, but I returned home and delivered my message. My father said, very drily: "I daresay they are pleased about it," but then my father was a Tory of the Tories, and always professed to have lost all interest in English history after the execution of Charles I.

This was perhaps as well, because the English were regarded

in Prussian society in the early 'sixties as revolutionaries. At first Prussian officers were afraid to call on my father otherwise than in plain clothes for fear of having the King's uniform insulted, but when it was discovered that he was as little in sympathy with radicalism, and socialism, and "the voice of the people" as they were themselves they gradually began to have confidence in him, until he was actually made honorary member of the mess of the Kaiser Alexander Garde Grenadier Regiment, by a sergeant of which crack corps I was instructed in the mysteries of the goose-step and physical drill. This martinet was also instructor to the children of the Crown Prince and used to tell me how the latter thrashed his eldest son. The verdict of history will no doubt be that he did not thrash him enough.

Hauptmann von Wehren was my father's particular friend in that regiment, a rather grim and solemn figure, with a keen sense of fun behind an inscrutable moustache and an impressively serious face. As I have said we lived in a flat, on the second floor to be precise, and under us there resided a banker of the name of Liebert with his handsome wife, who was intensely musical and played the piano literally from morning to night, with only brief intervals for meals. Alas! my poor father was not musical. He always maintained that the sound of a piano produced a pain in his head as though hot needles were being inserted into his temples. No doubt there was some slight exaggeration in this statement, but that he suffered there could be no doubt. Very politely, and with great diffidence he made overtures to Herr Liebert and his "gnaedige Frau," and begged them to allow him some respite in the day or evening, but his petitions were repulsed with scorn. Surely a person could be allowed to indulge a taste for music at home without interference from neighbours. My poor father was in despair after this rebuff, and as he was walking dejectedly down the street asking himself what he should do he met his friend, von Wehren.

"Hulloh!" cried von Wehren, "what's the matter? Have you got married? You do look miserable."

My father, who was at that time a widower, explained his troubles.

"Humph!" said von Wehren firmly, "why not give a concert yourself?"

"I, give a concert!" my father exclaimed, aghast.

"Yes," said von Wehren, "why shouldn't you have a little music also? I will send you my drum and fife band and we'll have a really jolly musical evening."

After the night of that memorable concert, the Lieberts climbed down and came to terms, agreeing to allow my father a few intervals of peace every day.

The intelligent reader will have gathered from the above that I lost my mother early in life. As a matter of fact I was only two years old when she succumbed to pneumonia which she had contracted in a bleak Berlin winter, my brother Reginald, who had barely attained his first year, dying at the same time from the same complaint. I thus was left an only child without a mother's care, and led a rather sad and solitary life, for I had no playfellows. German children I was not allowed to see, and there were no English boys in Berlin with the exception of the Lowther children. The Hon. Nassau Jocelyn, a secretary of the British Legation, suggested that I should play with the sons of the Hon. William Lowther, but my father who held all forms of gambling, including cards and horse-racing, in aversion, disapproved of that fine English gentleman because he was a racing man. In later years it was my privilege to become acquainted with two of his sons. One lived to be our Ambassador at Constantinople and was in every respect a charming citizen of the world, free from anything even approaching side. His death at a comparatively early age was a real loss to diplomacy. The other is best known as having been a genial and witty Speaker of the House of Com-

mons, the present Lord Ullswater. I often used to watch them wistfully in the Thiergarten but was not permitted to know them then.

Another recollection of the Thiergarten is a picture in my mind of the handsome Sir Andrew Buchanan, the father of Sir George, our last Ambassador to the Russian Court. Sir Andrew used to ride every morning, superbly mounted, and looking, with his aristocratic aquiline nose, erect figure and haughty mien, the very *beau idéal* of an English gentleman, although, by the way, he was of course a Scotchman. On one occasion, his son subsequently told me, he was given a presentation portrait which was a wretched daub and did him but little justice. On first seeing it, he eyed it contemptuously and exclaimed: "I had always thought, until now, that I was rather a good-looking fellow!"

Another interesting British envoy at the Court of Berlin, was Lord Augustus Loftus, whose memoirs are such good reading. Lord Augustus was an example of that combination of pride and amiability, which was so great a characteristic of our Victorian aristocracy. He was popular though impecunious, indeed he was said to be always in debt, and the local Berlin tradesmen had the greatest difficulty in getting their bills paid, until they hit upon the ingenious idea of prosecuting and arresting his steward, for of course Lord Augustus's person was inviolable.

Through the mists of time there floats before my vision the beautiful countenance of Princess Friedrich Carl, the wife of the Red Prince, as he was called, and the mother of the late Duchess of Connaught. Lord Frederick Hamilton in his delightful *Vanished Pomps of Yesterday* has descanted on her loveliness, but it was not his privilege to see her in the bloom of her youth, as I did some twelve years earlier. Child as I was, I conceived for her a romantic passion and was fertile in stratagems to get a smile and bow from that graceful princess

as she took her constitutional with her lady-in-waiting in some secluded pathway of the Thiergarten. Her face always wore a sweet and, to my mind, angelic expression, and seemed to radiate happiness round her, although the scandal-mongers of Berlin insisted that her royal husband ill-treated her. This I have every reason to believe was a gross calumny. Prince Friedrich Carl, who had not then grown his heavy beard, was one of the most handsome men I ever remember seeing, with a fine black moustache and gentle dreamy blue eyes. In his Hussar uniform, mounted on his charger, he looked magnificent. But there was a sad aloofness about him, for he was misunderstood and slandered. A royal prince who takes his profession seriously is thereby guilty of an unpardonable solecism. This was the crime of Prince Friedrich Carl. When he joined the Prussian army the cavalry was its least satisfactory arm; what he did for it appears from Wolfgang Foerster's exhaustive Life; which also brings in strong relief the sympathetic side of the Prince's character as revealed in his own simple and unaffected letters.

Berlin in the 'sixties was a very different place from what it is now. It did not then show any signs of developing into a bourgeois stuccopolis. The houses were ugly, unpretentious but quaint, with sloping roofs. The shops were small and unattractive. The roads were paved with cobble-stones, and the footways consisted of a narrow band of flag-stones with cobbles on each side. The gutters were an abomination to the olfactory organs, little rivulets of dark and evil-smelling liquid, to be crossed at intervals by small footbridges. Vehicles were primitive, the droschke, or cab, a pestiferous abomination. Some of these were lined with red plush, to which colour I was very partial.

If the streets were ugly, the people in them were equally unattractive. Well-dressed civilians were rare, and the women displayed a lamentable want of taste and had no sense of colour.

Interiors were poor and gloomily furnished. Carpets were virtually unknown, walls were bare. There was an inevitable sofa in every drawing-room with an oval table in front of it and a number of uncomfortable chairs in a circle round it. Artificial light was supplied by oil lamps and few rooms had curtains. Society was necessarily contracted, for the Berlin world was divided roughly into *canaille* and *Adelige* (nobles); the former had the money, the latter were poor, proud and exclusive. The only real gentlemen were the officers; they were plain-living and high-thinking. Quiet in demeanour, unassuming in manner, they wore little side-swords, and were too poor to lead ostentatious lives. A friend of my father's, Baron von Steinecker, who was aide-de-camp to the king, lived in humble third-floor lodgings. He subsequently married a wealthy English lady and one of his sons went to South Africa and raised Steinecker's Horse.

The bourgeois or *Spiessbuerger* element was republican in sentiment, vulgar in tone and aggressive in manner. They had the money, but they knew that they could never hope to gain a footing in society, which they consequently hated; officers were their special detestation. The street-boys of Berlin, who had a reputation for a certain caustic wit, used, when they met an officer to sing the following doggerel ditty:

Offizier, armes Thier,
Rothen Kragen, nichts im Magen,
Goldene Tressen, nichts zu fressen.

which being interpreted meant: Officer—poor beast; red collar, empty stomach, gold lace, no fodder.

The Berliners had another joke: "What is the difference," they would ask, "between one end of Unter den Linden and the other?" "At one end is *das Brandenburger Thor*, but at the other is *der Brandenburger Thor*." The word *Thor* means fool as well as gate, and the king's palace stood at the top of Unter den Linden, whilst the famous gate was at the bottom.

In spite of the drabness of Berlin life there was also much joyousness, and life was cheap. A *Thaler*, equal to three shillings, was a sum of money, and people thought in *Silbergroschen*. For one *Thaler* you could get the famous seven-course dinner at the Hôtel du Nord, which was then the Ritz of Berlin. Here royalties used to stay, and nothing more magnificent could be conceived by Prussian imagination.

Kroll's was then the place of entertainment. I had a vague idea that it was a naughty place, and still remember feeling a sort of thrill whenever I passed it, but it was only a sort of *café chantant* with a garden attached. The Opera was of course the smart place, and there was also a very fine Schauspiel house, for the legitimate drama. Here came Phelps with his company to play Shakespeare, and was very much admired, but at a performance of *Macbeth* two Germans who had been following the English from the stalls with the aid of Tieck and Schlegel's excellent translation, were overheard to exchange the following comments:

"How beautifully they act!" said one.

"Yes," rejoined the other, "but how horribly they mispronounce the names!"

The beer-places in the open air during the hot summer months, with their brass bands, were another source of entertainment, but the Theirgarten was my greatest joy. Here was the fascinating gold-fish pond, and here were to be seen all the royalties and notabilities. The greatest person among all the inhabitants of the capital was still a dark horse, and but little known. He was not a butterfly and was not to be met in the fashionable crowds. Only once did I see him, but I still remember his striking figure. He was driving in a shabby open droschke when he was pointed out to me, a sallow-faced, red-nosed disreputable individual, smoking a big cigar, wearing a long black moustache which was in after life clipped short, dressed in black broad-cloth, with a rather battered silk hat

shoved to the back of his head, and looking as though he did not care a tinker's curse for anybody, there was Bismarck. Hated and despised by high and low, he was regarded as an upstart and a boor. His rough and overbearing manners made him objectionable to the court, and his frankly reactionary political opinions made him hated by the people. But his time was to come. In the course of a few years he transformed the face of his country. His royal master and he became the most popular figures in Germany, and the race of republicans had ceased to be. But he also vulgarised the aristocracy and introduced the worship of wealth into a nation which had been content to be proud and poor. What Bismarck did for the nation William II. did for the army, he substituted for the unostentatious side-sword, the clanging sabre, he encouraged swashbuckling, and destroyed the sobriety and distinction of the officer.

If Bismarck did much to change Germany, other influences were also at work. Among these the Princess Royal, who lived to be known as the Empress Frederick, was not the least important. Her influence certainly was entirely for good, but it was also almost revolutionary. She did much to brighten Berlin society and to promote the love of art and beauty, but what she could not do was to give the Berliners a sense of good taste. It will take generations to do that. She certainly shocked people by insisting on living in Prussia very much as she had been accustomed to live in England, and especially by drinking wine at dinner, a luxury which the frugal wives of the poverty-stricken Prussian nobles had been unable to afford.

There is a rather pleasant story of the Prince Frederick, her husband, which illustrates his modesty and simplicity of manner. When he and his newly married consort made their entry into Berlin a photograph was taken of the young couple in their open carriage. This photograph was on sale at a certain well-known photographer's shop and one day greatly attracted the

young Prince as he was passing, so he stepped in, purchased it, and ordered it to be sent home. The shop assistant, who saw before her an unassuming young officer, some lieutenant or other no doubt, asked to know his name and address. The poor Prince was covered with confusion. His modesty forbade him to declare himself proudly for what he was, as his less retiring son would most certainly have done, and for a moment he was at a loss, the shop-girl eyeing him suspiciously. At last a gentle smile lighted up his face, as pointing to the picture, he explained: "Ich bin Derjenige welcher da drin sitzt" (I am he who is sitting in there). The phrase "Derjenige welcher" became a regular term, and is still in jocular colloquial use, although its origin has long been forgotten.

Before his marriage and while he was still betrothed he always carried about with him a portrait of his fiancée. At a Court Ball in Berlin, Mme. van de Velde, who was then a beautiful *débutante*, was dancing with him, and ventured to congratulate him rather archly on his engagement. The Prince, so Mme. van de Velde herself told me, immediately retired with his partner into an alcove and, producing a portrait of Princess Victoria, showed it to her, exclaiming: "Is she not beautiful?"

When the Princess Royal arrived in Berlin and took up her residence there she naturally took a great interest in the Chapel of the English colony. A room in the Monbijou Palace had been coverted into a place of religious worship, a pulpit and an altar had been erected and here the beautiful Church of England services were held. The chaplain was a worthy old gentleman, Belson by name, who, like the father of the late Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, was supposed to have been a converted Jew. He was a very excellent man but not an inspiring preacher, moreover he had rather a guttural accent and a bad delivery. The Princess declared she would not sit under that "snuffling old Jew," as she called him. When, through the accession of William I. to the Prussian throne, Prince Frederick became the

Crown Prince and the British Legation was raised to the rank of an Embassy, the Princess thought that the English chapel had become the chapel of the Embassy, and that her time had come for getting rid of Mr. Belson. Our first Ambassador, Lord Blomfield, was instructed to engage the then fashionable and always brilliant Mr. Stopford Brooke to replace Mr. Belson. But the English colony was up in arms. They did not perhaps very much admire Mr. Belson's sermons, but they indignantly resented the attempt of the Crown Princess to have him turned out, after so many years' faithful service, more especially as they disputed her right to interfere, seeing that, as they maintained, the chapel at Monbijou had been a gift from the Prussian Crown to the colony and was quite independent of the newly created Embassy. Dr. Strousberg, himself of Jewish origin, had become a churchwarden, and was particularly wrath, threatening to write to *The Times* and make trouble. There was a very simple remedy, and that was to produce the deed of gift, but unfortunately no such document could be traced. It so happened that my father was on friendly terms with the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Loeper, and from him he ascertained that the chapel had not been bestowed by deed, but simply by a minute. All Prussian government records are "State secrets," and must not be divulged to third parties, but this difficulty was got over in the following manner. Herr von Loeper asked my father to see him at the Foreign Office, showed him the minute and left the room while my father copied it. It is needless to say that the great unpopularity in Germany of the *Englaenderin*, as the Crown Princess was called, was a large factor in the complacency of Herr von Loeper. But the King himself was anxious to avoid a scandal, for the Crown Princess was so much disliked already that any act of hers calculated to increase that dislike was strongly deprecated. The wording of the minute showed so clearly that the chapel had been granted to the English congregation and not to the

representative of the British government, that Lord Blomfield saw at once, when the copy was shown to him, that the Embassy had no *locus standi*. However, Mr. Stopford Brooke was already on his way to take up his appointment as Chaplain to the British Embassy. What was to be done? The Embassy had got a chaplain but no chapel. A solution was soon found, a lectern purchased, and the Embassy drawing-room converted into a place of worship. Here Mr. Stopford Brooke preached some moving sermons to a select congregation which included the Princess Royal. And so a compromise was effected and a scandal avoided. For his part in the incident my father was personally thanked by the King. I was once taken to these services and remember my disgust because Mr. Stopford Brooke preached in a surplice and not in a Geneva gown, as did Mr. Belson. Moreover Mr. Belson preached from a pulpit, which was a sort of balcony, the entrance to which from an arch in the wall was screened off by a curtain. Thus Mr. Belson's feet were invisible, and this I then regarded as essential.

For me the arrival of Mr. Stopford Brooke proved a blessing, for he brought his large family with him, and no objection could be raised against the sons of an English clergyman, so they became my playfellows.

In describing Berlin I omitted to refer to the pleasures of the winter. Central heating had not yet been invented, but the ghostly white-tiled stoves gave out a grateful warmth and maintained it throughout the day. My memory stores no recollection of cold or draughty rooms, nor of oppressive stuffiness, such as I was to experience later, but only a sense of uniform comfort. The snow-covered Thiergarten was a delight, and so were the dear old-fashioned sleighs with their pleasant if rather monotonous tinkling bells. Then there was snowballing and skating. But the happiest recollection of all was Christmas and New Year. Unter den Linden was then a village of booths in which were sold delectable things, beautiful

ginger-bread and chimney-sweeps made of chocolate. For some unexplained reason the chimney-sweep was the particular favourite of German childhood. He wore a special dress with a peculiar hood, and there was always a mystery about his colour. Was he born black, or was his duskiness only an acquired characteristic? This was a great problem. Never shall I forget the first disillusion of my life when I met with my nurse a fresh rosy-coloured young man in spotless Sunday clothes, and was told he was our chimney-sweep, that dear black monster whom I loved and who, I was told, had it in his power to give good children toys, and would carry away naughty ones! At first I stubbornly refused to believe my nurse, it was not until her statement was confirmed by infallible parental authority that I reluctantly accepted it.

The German Christmas tree which is decorated and illuminated on Christmas Eve (*Heiligen Abend*) was another great joy. In no other country, and I have seen many, is the Christmas tree so thoroughly understood as it was in my childhood in Berlin, before the Germans had got swollen-headed. First of all there was the market where the Christmas tree was purchased. This, which resembled a miniature forest, was in itself an ineffable treat. But when once the tree had been brought home, children were not allowed to see it. In the *Saal*, or drawing-room, it was concealed from view. The doors were securely fastened, and inside mysterious things were being done. Only in the evening were the doors thrown open and the children and the relations, the invited guests, and even the servants admitted. A blaze of light greeted them. The vision was too dazzling and glorious to be analysed and described. Glittering in gold and silver, illuminated by innumerable candles, there stood the transfigured tree, and round it on tables were the gifts for those present. Each person was called by name and proceeded solemnly to the table to receive at the hands of the master his or her respective Christmas present,

nobody was forgotten, and round that beautiful Christmas tree there prevailed an unforgettable spirit of true and unpretentious Christian charity.

New Year's Eve on the other hand was a purely pagan feast. It was celebrated at the stroke of twelve by drinking rum punch and eating dough-nuts filled with jam. At that solemn hour the night watchman would magisterially walk in and sonorously salute the master of the house with a rafter-shaking "Prosit Neu Jahr!" whereupon he would be given a drink and would depart. In the streets loud voices would repeat the cry: "Prosit Neu Jahr!" All sorts of people would rush into each other's arms, long forgotten friends would suddenly turn up. Processions of youths, singing folk-songs as only Germans can, would march along the main thoroughfares, guns boomed, and a perfect frenzy of pagan joyousness, somewhat bacchanalian in character, seemed to infect the whole population. Those were robust times. I last witnessed the Berlin New Year festivities in 1911, but what a change! People were either self-conscious and pompous or simply rowdy, the hearty genial spirit of fun was absent, and the fat and wealthy German merchants in their irreproachable dress-clothes, accompanied by their equally stout and gorgeously arrayed ladies, made the Kaiserhof hideous. Gone was the abandon, the spontaneousness, of those primitive times of my childhood.

As for myself I was, I am afraid, a precocious little prig in those days. A strict martinet, my father alternately fondled and thrashed me, which was not, I am afraid, the best way to bring up a child. Besides, I was too much in the company of grown-up people. A great mania of my father's was deportment. I was constantly enjoined to lift my head up and lift up my feet when I walked, and I was sternly ordered not "to stick my stomach out." "No gentleman," said my father, "sticks his stomach out."

One day there came to call an old friend who had been

absent for some years, a Dr. Hartwig, a tall German with a protuberant corporation, what Dickens would have called "a portly gentleman." I was duly trotted out for his inspection, and, with my father's injunction still fresh in my memory, I gazed at him in amazement. "Papa," I at last exclaimed, "Dr. Hartwig sticks his stomach out!" I am afraid I was a horrid little wretch!

There remains but little to tell of what I can remember of Berlin. I have a vivid recollection of the Schleswig Holstein War, and of the troops marching off to the front, and Otto von Ende, the tallest officer in the guards, who was an aide-de-camp of von Moltke's, coming to say good-bye. I also remember General von Willisen, who had been retired and was out of it, calling in plain clothes to tell my father what a mess Moltke and his generals were making of the war.

A more amusing memory is that of the veteran Field-Marshal von Wrangel walking down Unter den Linden to his house in the Pariser Platz followed by a cohort of street-boys shouting: "Vater Wrangel! Vater Wrangel!" after him.

Old Wrangel, who was an octogenarian and very eccentric, was a great admirer of the fair sex and I remember his getting off his white horse one day to pinch the cheeks of my blushing nurse, who was a very pretty girl.

When the Austrian war was about to break out it was very unpopular with all classes. Prussia had universal short term service, whilst the Austrian army was composed of veterans.

"What chance," the Prussian officers used to say, "will our raw half-trained boys stand against such seasoned troops?"

Events proved that they were quite a match for them.

As I have said, the Austrian war was unpopular and the King could not get the necessary supplies voted, he was therefore obliged to effect economies wherever he could. Among other things he abolished the Naval Cadet School where my father was teaching seamanship under Haller von Hallerstein. The

Minister of War, General von Roon, offered him a commission in the Prussian navy, but as this would have entailed his renouncing his British nationality he declined it, and, on the advice of his English friends who furnished him with numerous letters of introduction, he proceeded to the United States of America, taking me and his second wife with him.

CHAPTER III

AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

We sailed for New York from Hamburg in 1866 on a German steamer which, although comfortable enough, was far from being as splendid as the magnificent floating palaces of the Hamburg-America Line. However, it was a steady-going vessel which did the journey in a fortnight, and the food was abundant. What particularly appealed to me was the custom of serving ham, tongue and sausage "butter-brods" at eleven o'clock. Before leaving, a friend of my father's who was in command of a Prussian frigate, invited us to inspect it. This was the first and only German man-of-war I have ever been on. I particularly remember the sailor with musket over his shoulder doing sentry-go on the quarter-deck, and the cheerless atmosphere everywhere. There was little of the jollity about the men which characterises the British tar.

Arrived at New York, we put up at a boarding-house in 14th Street, now no longer a residential neighbourhood, which was kept by a Mrs. Blamire whose husband was the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Mr. Blamire was a typical Uncle Sam, the very image of President Lincoln, with a clean shaven upper lip and a goatee beard.

As I have stated, while in Berlin, I once went on a visit to my grandmother in London, and I was surprised to see how much New York resembled London. The sky-scrapers, for which that western metropolis is to-day famous, had not yet been erected, and the houses had area railings and looked exactly like English dwellings. Already, however, the boarding-house habit had set in. The only difference to my eye between

the streets of London and New York was the greater brightness of the latter, especially in the case of the omnibuses which were painted white. The stars and stripes were also very much in evidence and contributed to the polychromatic effect. There were no elevated railroads, no tramways, no Riverside Drive, and Central Park was somewhat of a wilderness. But the police, though differently dressed, were as magnificent as in London, and used to manage the traffic in a truly impressive manner. America has always suffered from the lawlessness of some of the poorer section of its alien immigrants, but in those days there were no Italian dagoes, or Hungarian and Slavonic workers, nor had the Chinese discovered the Western Hemisphere. The undesirable element was supplied by the Irish, the so-called "rowdies," who carried "bowie-knives," and were as much dreaded by the police as by the ordinary citizens. The police, it is true, were armed with revolvers, as well as with truncheons, but the humane United States Government prescribed so small a calibre that the bullets resembled pills, without "stopping" power, and had no terrors for the Irish rowdies who used to take a fierce pleasure in stabbing unfortunate policemen with their knives. It was a frequent occurrence to see bloodstained policemen carried by their comrades through the streets. I saw many such sights and remember the feeling of compassion with which these victims of Celtic fury were regarded. To-day, of course, the Irish supply some of the best elements of the population of the Republic.

When we arrived, America had just triumphantly emerged from her civil war and there was still a good deal of the martial spirit about. Every other man one met was a colonel. This was not surprising, but what will no doubt surprise my readers will be to learn that the American language was much more provincial, and its pronunciation much more nasal, than it is at present. To-day the difference between the

English language as spoken in England and on the other side of the Atlantic is much more a difference of intonation than of actual accent, though, of course, certain words are pronounced quite differently. The increased facilities of communication have brought the United States much nearer to Europe than they formerly were and have broken down many barriers between us. But this greater proximity has paradoxically enough made America more of a foreign country than it used to be. This is due mainly if not entirely to the influx of aliens from other countries, more especially Germany. In the 'sixties there were already many Germans in America, but they soon lost their national characteristics and forgot their native language even when they had not succeeded in fully mastering that of the country of their adoption. This state of things continued for many years, but with the formation of the German Empire a new patriotism and pride of country sprang up, and the Germans became less easy to assimilate. In the modern transformation of New York a good deal of German influence can be traced.

Without hesitation I can affirm that the finest sight I ever saw in my life was the 4th of July celebration in New York in 1866. I had seen many military reviews in Berlin, but the parade of the American troops on that occasion was the most impressive I have ever seen. To begin with, the formation was totally different from the Prussian, the men marched in lines, two lines to a platoon, with their officers behind them. It must be admitted that it is much more difficult to keep lines straight and even, than to keep columns in review order. The troops were brilliantly uniformed, and marched in the slow, ceremonial step without a fault. I never saw a smarter looking lot of men or keener officers.

As I have said we lived in a boarding-house, and my *enfant terrible* qualities got me into a bad scrape. There was living at the same establishment a charming young lady who had an

admirer who was in the habit of calling on her *en tout bien et tout honneur*, but one day she denied herself to this gentleman, evidently true love was not running smoothly. Now I had been taught never to tell a lie, and the heinousness of even the faintest departure from the truth had always been severely impressed upon me. I happened to be in the hall when the gentleman in question came to call and was told that the lady he desired to see was out. I had seen her myself only a few minutes ago and knew that she was in and knew, moreover, that the servant was equally aware of it. Without any more ado I told her that she had told a lie and assured the gentleman that the lady was in. It was an awkward situation for the servant to be placed in, she lost her presence of mind and went upstairs to fetch the lady. As the latter came down, I indignantly pointed the finger of scorn at her, and cried out: "Oh! fie! you've told a lie!"

Of course there was a row, and the lady complained, but, to the credit of my father be it said, he took a lenient view of my entirely gratuitous and officious quixotism.

During that summer, New York was visited by one of its periodical epidemics of cholera, and my father was stricken down. The doctor who was sent for diagnosed the illness as cholera and popped him into a cab and straight off to hospital. I vividly remember our tearful farewell and the conviction that we should never see each other again as this disease was claiming fresh victims daily. But on the morrow, to our surprise, my father returned, perfectly cured and happy. He explained that instead of going to hospital he had gone to a hotel, ordered a bottle of brandy, the whole of which he had consumed, gone to bed, and woken up next morning feeling as right as rain. This heroic though efficacious treatment is, I am told, impracticable in modern America under pussyfoot conditions.

My father had set out for America in the hope of getting a

professorship of comparative mythology, a subject to which he had devoted much study. Prospects of the founding of such a chair by Cambridge University, near Boston, had been held out to him, and consequently, after a short stay in New York we proceeded to the hub of the universe.

We went by steamer, one of those wonderful American steamers all painted white and with its saloons built on the main deck and only two narrow gangways each side for a promenade. To-day nearly all passenger steamers have deck-cabins, but it is at least possible to promenade on the top of them. I confess I did not like this system of narrow promenades, by means of which the view was limited to what could be seen from one side of the steamer only. But I also received a shock which time has not effaced. The service on these steamers was performed by "coloured gentlemen," for no white man in America would in those days so far have forgotten his democratic principles and his "manhood," as to abase himself by waiting on his equals or doing any kind of menial work. The famous Irish saying: "Every man is as good as another and a great deal better," was particularly applicable to America. At my first meal on board this American steamer a negro in a white jacket handed me my food. He wanted to be particularly amiable, yet his laughing eyes and large white teeth made him look like an ogre and frightened me not a little; but what gave me a shock and produced a sensation akin to sickness was the sight of his horrible hands, black outside, but yellow between the thumbs and fingers.

I have no prejudice against colour and certainly not against negroes, for I have generally found them loyal, cheerful and affectionate creatures, much more disposed to acts of kindliness than to cruelty, but that first sensation of seeing the uncanny yellow fingers of those black hands gave me an aversion to them which it has taken years to get over.

Of Boston I retain very little recollection, but here there

was an intellectual society and an atmosphere of culture which made it very different from New York, which has left on my memory a picture of brightness, not to say gaudiness, and new paint, whilst my confused recollection of Boston is of a rather dingy and gloomy character. I was taken to see two plays: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and a pantomime, and remember how much I was struck by the bustling rapidity of the action. According to Horace, *Graiis dedit ore rotundo Musa loqui*, but the Americans, who have since become much more deliberate, were then all for speed. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was played like a farce, and the pantomime was just a knockabout.

Among my father's friends was a dear old gentleman with beautiful snowy, long, white hair, the Hon. Theophilus Parsons, a senator, and philosopher, as well as a lawyer of distinction, who died in 1882, aged eighty-five. His family was an old and distinguished one sprung from the famous American lawyer, Theophilus Parsons, who was born in Boston in 1750, and became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. Another charming family was the Worcester family, the principal ornament of which, Joseph Emerson Worcester, the lexicographer, had but recently died at the mature age of eighty-one. In this little set of refined and cultured people, lawyers and thinkers, mostly Swedenborgians, we found a great contrast to the unpolished business men we had left behind us. They were thoroughly democratic in their views, but they did not seem to think democracy meant uncouthness or that republicanism was the glorification of the Yahoo. On the contrary, they had exquisite, distinguished manners, and their womenkind had a brightness, freshness and delicacy which was quite free from affectation and was inspired by a sweetness of disposition and a kindliness of heart that can only be described as angelic.

The principal entertainments in this gentle though somewhat provincial society took the form of tea-parties, and at one

of these my father perpetrated a pun which was particularly appropriate to that *milieu*. Asked whether he was fond of tea, he exclaimed, how could he fail to love it when it was "t" that made Poe a poet? Had that eccentric genius but confined his potations to that harmless beverage he might, some may think, have produced less remarkable verse but he would assuredly have spared himself much unhappiness.

We did not remain long in Boston but were invited to stay with the Worcesters in their charming country house in the village of Waltham, now the home of the watch industry, but then an Arcadian rural retreat. I have a vivid recollection of the luscious monster grapes which this favoured spot produced; never before had I eaten the like. They used to be brought by a genial friend of ours, a Dr. Coolidge, also a Swedenborgian. He had a great desire to learn German, but could not master the difficulties of the genders. The phrase he had committed to memory had suffered at his hands from this inability, and it was most amusing to hear him repeat: "Es lohnt sich nicht zu weinen um umgeschuetteltes Milch." "Milch" (milk) being feminine, the adjective should have had the feminine termination and should have been pronounced "umgeschuettelte." But just as it is no use crying over spilt milk, so is it no use trying to teach German genders to people who cannot remember them.

The Worcesters had a charming little grandchild, who had a pet lamb with a pretty blue ribbon round its neck, which followed her wherever she went just like the lamb in the nursery rhyme.

An aunt of hers, a very sweet, delicate, fair girl, with soft, pensive, blue eyes, used to try to speak German to my stepmother, and created much amusement by translating English phrases literally into German, as for instance: "Denken Sie auch nicht so?" "Don't you think so too?"

When the "fall" came and all the leaves began to look like

Virginia creepers we returned to Boston, where my father, with unconquerable optimism, took a house. That house was a marvel to me, not so much on account of its design as because of its heating arrangements. In those days there was no central heating, and American houses were warmed by means of iron stoves. Each room had a little stove of its own, but in the hall there was erected a veritable giant which warmed the whole staircase. These iron stoves gave off a most peculiar, disagreeable and suffocating smell, and had a decidedly unpleasant effect on the atmosphere of the house. Living in these conditions was positive purgatory, especially for me who was then subject to severe attacks of asthma, a complaint, I am happy to say, which left me as I grew to manhood. Fortunately I was not doomed to suffer long. The professorship which had been so ardently hoped for never materialised, and at last we decided to return to Europe, for America and American conditions of life, in spite of the delightful people we had met, did not appeal to my father; besides, he felt that in that land of business and dollars there was no market for the only merchandise he could offer: learning, and learning, too, of a peculiar and perhaps a rather useless kind, comparative philology and mythology. So, after delivering a course of lectures he departed.

Years afterwards he had again occasion to visit America on business connected with a patent for a form of ship's bottom which he had invented, and went to Washington where Great Britain was then so ably represented by Sir Julian Pauncefoote, whose charming family were such an ornament to American society.

This is, perhaps, the proper place in which to tell a story about Sir Edward Thornton, a predecessor of Sir Julian's, which the former used to relate with much quiet humour.

A new secretary had been appointed, and on him devolved the duty of issuing invitations to "functions." Sir Edward Thornton was rather anxious that a socially important widow

should be included in the invitations. He, therefore, summoned the new secretary, a very superior and haughty young man, and gave him the lady's name and address. Now Washington streets run alphabetically, A Street, B Street, etc. The lady in question lived at a certain number in I Street.

"Oh! yes," said the very exquisite secretary, "Number so and so High Street," picking up the "h" which he thought Sir Edward had dropped.

It is not given to everybody to have the impudence to correct the English of a British Minister Plenipotentiary.

CHAPTER IV

PARIS UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE

Our voyage to England was performed in an English ship and we celebrated Christmas in mid-Atlantic. For real Christmas cheer and genuine festive heartiness commend me to a British ship; it is impossible to conceive of anything more jolly.

Arrived in London in mid-winter I was particularly struck by a phenomenon which I have never observed in any other country. In the parks, under the snow, there was green grass! In Germany and Russia the grass is all burnt up in the summer and does not begin to get green until the spring.

One day, as we were walking across Regent's Park, we saw the ornamental water, which was covered with ice, thick with skaters, and as they moved about over the surface the ice seemed to sway and crack under them. Familiar as we were with skating conditions and winter sports, we thought the ice looked very dangerous, and this was even pointed out to one of the park-keepers, but no notice was taken. Very shortly afterwards the ice gave way and that terrible historical disaster occurred through which hundreds of lives were lost. Since, I believe, the depth of water at Regent's Park has been so considerably reduced as to make any danger from drowning, in the event of a repetition of such a failure, virtually impossible.

London was a dreary place after the bright and crisp atmosphere of North America, and I was not sorry to leave the fogs of England behind me, when it was decided that we should proceed to Russia with letters of introduction, notably one from Sir Roderick Murchison to Admiral Count Lütcke, the

personal aide-de-camp of the Emperor's eldest brother, the Grand Duke Constantine. Our route was *via* Paris and the Rhine, and we intended breaking our journey on the way, travelling leisurely.

Paris was at that time in the full glory of the Second Empire and preparing for its great exhibition. The Americans had already discovered, but not conquered, that gay capital, nor had they as yet introduced their bars in every street; but it was already the place good Americans were supposed to go to when they died. The grand boulevards had not grown dingy with age, and the Champs-Élysées was still a children's paradise.

Well do I remember seeing Napoleon III. with the Empress Eugénie and little Lulu driving along that splendid thoroughfare preceded and followed by mounted *cents gardes* wearing gorgeous bear-skin shakoes.

I must confess to having been disappointed in the Emperor, who wore a silk hat, always an abomination in my childish eyes, and a black coat. In Berlin I had been accustomed to see royalty clothed simply but with dignity in military uniforms, while here was the representative of the Napoleonic legend, looking like a not too prosperous shopkeeper, with an untidy, badly-waxed moustache, a repulsively ugly goatee-beard, and thick tufts of coarse hair on each side of his temples sticking out under a shocking bad hat. Had I been told he was an undertaker it would not have surprised me. Moreover he had nothing regal or imperial about his face. There was a furtive, sullen and somewhat anxious look on his countenance, as though he expected to be assassinated at any moment, and besides, hoped that nobody would find him out. A very melancholy Emperor, in short. The Empress by his side was the greatest contrast possible. Beautiful, gracious, wreathed in smiles, and—accustomed as I was to German dowdiness—somewhat over-dressed; she appeared to be trying to correct the depressing effect that her imperial consort was bound to produce.

"Looks like a disconcerted pick-pocket," I overheard some English passer-by exclaim.

The couple certainly did not look like the rulers of France, but more like prosperous bourgeois out for a drive.

The Emperor and Empress drove out in this fashion every day, and great were the precautions taken for their safety. It was commonly reported that wherever he went Napoleon III. was unobtrusively shadowed by English detectives, for, having himself been a special constable, he had conceived a great admiration for the English police, and was supposed to have modelled the French police upon it.

The *sergents de ville* of Paris were indeed a *corps d'élite*, in their elegant cocked hats, their neat swallow-tailed coats, buttoned to the chin, with a single row of white metal buttons, and a side-sword. They were always scrupulously polite and had exquisite manners. Although they wore side-swords, they also carried batons concealed behind their coat-tails.

If the police gave a drawing-room air to the streets, what shall I say about the soldiers? These were simply magnificent, in their long dark tunics, their pipe-clayed accoutrements, their heavy red epaulets, their crimson trousers, white gaiters and bear-skin shakoes. They all had waxed moustaches and goatee-beards like the Emperor, and their sergeant-majors looked splendid in tufted cocked hats. It was a joy to see them march, to see them mount guard, to see the guard at any of the innumerable palaces turn out.

But there were no officers to be seen in the streets. In those days the officers of the army of the people which had the greatest military reputation in Europe, whose military technical terms were used in every country in the world, followed the example of their Emperor, and walked about in mufti, and in such mufti too! I do not think there was ever a time in the whole history of the world when human beings dressed themselves more hideously than they did in the 'sixties.

Curiously enough, under the Republic (before and after the war), French officers appear in public in uniform, thus adding to the brightness of the scene. In Bolshevik Russia every second person one meets wears a nondescript uniform of some sort. But in imperial France mufti was the only wear for a gentleman.

The Emperor was supposed to be very jealous of the Empress, although reputed himself to be more affectionate than faithful as a husband; and he was also very particular regarding the way she was treated in public. In this connection I am reminded of an incident. *Le Sieur de Framboisie* was a song very much in vogue then. It was about an old gentleman who had married a young *Parisienne* and carried her off to his chateau where she was so bored that she ran away. Her husband came to look for her in Paris *pour trois jours et quatre nuits* and at last finds her at a public dancing place. He greets her with: "*Corbleu, Madame, que faites vous ici?*" and takes her back to the château where *il la coupa sa tête avec un coup de fusil, la creusa sa tombe avec son parapluie. Nennie, nennie, nennie.* It was the kind of mock-heroic song of which "Vilikins and his Dinah" and "The Rat-catcher's Daughter" are the English types.

One day at the Opera, the Empress being already there, the Emperor arrived late. As he entered the imperial box some wag in the gallery sang out: "*Corbleu, Madame, que faites vous ici?*" and in consequence of this vulgarity the song from which it was a quotation was prohibited. But there was another song which, although also prohibited, was much sung by the disloyal. It had for refrain, "*Père, la mère Badingue, et le petit Badinguet, à trois sous tout l'paquet,*" in which the Emperor was described as having orders *partout, partout, partout.*

The Emperor was perfectly aware of his own unpopularity, for he was as little liked as his predecessor Louis Philippe, under a plaster bust of which monarch an impertinent person once

wrote: *Il est très bien en plâtre, en terre il serait bien mieux.* On the occasion when a half-demented Pole fired at the carriage containing Napoleon III., Alexander II. and William I. and failed to kill any of them, Napoleon at once claimed the shot for himself, and the three sovereigns politely vied with each other for the obloquy of being the intended victim. This happened, however, after we had left Paris.

A pretty story is told of these two foreign potentates during their stay in Paris. One afternoon they managed to escape from their vigilant entourage and go on the spree together. They went to one of the *cafés chantants* which then abounded in the Champs-Élysées and sat down at a table to enjoy themselves like ordinary mortals. Presently a typical Parisian bourgeois joined them and requested permission to take a seat at their table. Getting into conversation he soon started discussing foreign politics and was surprised to find how well informed the two strangers were. Rising to leave, he took off his hat, and asked them if he might have the honour of knowing to whom he had had the pleasure of talking.

"Certainly," said the elder of the two, "I am the King of Prussia."

"And I," said the younger, "am the Emperor of Russia."

Quite self-composed, the Frenchman, who was not to be outdone, replied: "*Eh bien, je vous salue, messieurs, je suis le grand Mogul!*"

Perhaps I was rather prejudiced against Napoleon III. because I had heard all about the *coup d'êtat* which had been indelibly impressed on my mind by a parody of "He's a jolly good fellow," published in *Punch* to "commemorate" the acceptance of an invitation to dinner by the Lord Mayor of London. It ran as follows:

> A traitor, but a winner, invited me to dinner
> Of course I knew my inner-
> Man too well not to go. Such feelings may be low
> But I could not say no, for he's a jolly good fellow, etc.

'Twas thus he won his legions, through their abdominal regions,
And colder than Norwegians'
Must be the heart and brain a good blow-out can't gain,
Sing sausages and champagne,[1] for he's a jolly good fellow, etc.

'Tis honour to inferiors to dine with their superiors,
Who cares in whose interiors
His bullets may abide? His prog's in my inside,
His roast and boiled and fried, for he's a jolly good fellow, etc.

It may here be interesting to record the views of Lord Cowley, our Ambassador in Paris, of Napoleon III. as expressed to Baron Brunnow, the Russian Ambassador in London, and reported by him to his chief, Count Nesselrode. This despatch, which I believe, has never before been published, is dated 21st February, 1853, and is in the archives of the Russian Embassy in London, which have been so admirably arranged and made accessible to students by Baron Alexander Meyendorff. The despatch is in French, and no translation of mine can hope to do justice to Baron Brunnow's inimitable style.

So far [he makes Lord Cowley say], I do not believe that Napoleon has a very clearly defined policy. In his brain one idea chases another. His constant aim is to divert, interest and astonish the country, and any expedient seems good enough to him for this purpose. But he exhausts the sources of amusement too rapidly. This is due to the precipitancy of his mind, to which infirmity I attribute the eagerness with which he hastened to restore the Empire. He should have played his game more deliberately. The restoration of the Empire was his trump card. He has played it, but the country wants something new, always something new. The marriage missed its effect. It has produced an impression which will injure his position. He has felt this. To remedy the failure he is counting on the sensation which the ceremonies and fêtes of the coronation promise to create. When this resource has been exhausted France will ask "What next?" As a last diversion there would remain the birth of an heir. Napoleon would wish for one, as he wishes for all things, with precipitancy. I am inclined to believe that he would expect one before the time decreed by the laws of nature. If he has

[1] Napoleon regaled his troops with sausages and champagne at an open-air fête on the Champs de Mars.

a son he will have arrived at the last of his expedients. It is then, I fear, that the time will come to think of diverting abroad the exuberant activities of the country. Who can tell in what direction they may break out? That will depend on circumstances. As far as I know, if he has any predilections they are centred on the coast of Africa. He is also believed to have his eye on Italy. I have no positive information with regard to this. But generally, as I have already said, he has not made up his mind. I am sure, however, that he will seize the first opportunity that comes, if he thinks it a good one. Nobody has any influence on him. His ministers are of no account. It is that which makes diplomatic relations in Paris so very difficult. Napoleon maintains a private correspondence with his principal agents abroad. He transmits directly to them instructions, the secrets of which are unknown to his Foreign Minister. . . . I have not much confidence in M. de Morny. He cannot be depended on, except in cases where he is interested in preventing an adverse fluctuation on the Bourse. Generally speaking, this is the motive which prompts the actions of public men in France. They are all involved in industrial and financial speculation. This is my only reason for hoping that peace will be maintained. A violent shock imparted to Europe would re-act on the private fortunes of all the stock-jobbers who to-day constitute the French Government. The finances of the country have been curiously complicated by the *crédit foncier* system. One of the causes which gave birth to this system was the desire to counterbalance the monetary power of the house of Rothschild. Napoleon suspects it of maintaining secret relations with the Orleans family. Hence his hatred and secret design to subdue the Rothschilds by means of a rival financial power disposing of equal credit. However, he has recognised the necessity of showing them some consideration, and has taken pains to flatter them. All these financial manœuvres exercise an influence on the political situation of which it is difficult to form an idea. However, unless I am much mistaken, Napoleon's anxiety to assure his private fortune against the hazards of the future counts for much in his calculations. I cannot help thinking that at the back of his mind he is himself in doubt as to the possibility of maintaining himself for long at the pinnacle of power which he has reached.

Baron Brunnow then submits Lord Cowley's views regarding Napoleon's marriage.

I was in a position [Lord Cowley is represented as saying] to follow this business very closely from its beginnings to its conclusion. Napoleon allowed himself to be drawn into the commission of a great political mistake solely by his obstinacy. He had conceived for Mlle. de Montijo a very ardent fancy, I will not say from love but rather from caprice. He had no thought of marriage. He was so far removed from such an idea that, down to the time of his journey to Compiègne, he said all that can be said against it. Guided on her part by a deliberate and very determined ambition, she understood that Napoleon would end by offering to share his crown with her. At that price she accepted his hand without cherishing the least affection for him. I believe that at present they both already regret their union which will not be happy. I knew Mlle. de Montijo. She is what we colloquially call "a fast young lady."[1] After her marriage I discovered in her neither dignity nor improvement. This alliance will not have the effect of restoring to France a respect for royalty. All parties feel this. The legitimists and Orleanists rejoice, the Bonapartists grieve, and the republicans jeer.

Napoleon aggravated his mistake by his speech. The term *parvenu,* by which he described himself, was most unfortunate. He wanted to flatter public opinion by stating that he had raised himself to the rank of the oldest dynasties by popular suffrage, but this time he failed to understand national sentiment. France wants the man who governs her to be a genuine monarch, born to govern, and to represent the greatness of the country in the eyes of Europe. He acted in this sense when he claimed to be the third of his line. The claim flattered the pride of the nation. Now he has on the contrary offended and humbled it in its self-respect by calling himself a *parvenu.* This is to disparage and abase France in her own eyes. I therefore consider his position to have been shaken, but it is not yet compromised, because no combination is at present possibly capable of supplanting him. France needs tranquillity, and under the present régime this is secured. The country accepts it, such as it is. I have no reason to believe that peace is in jeopardy, nor do I foresee any immediate complication, but I maintain we must be prepared for all eventualities, for we are living in unstable times.

[1] In the period when this despatch was written the word "fast," reflected rather on the propriety than the morals of a young lady. It was for instance "fast" for a lady to drive in a hansom cab, or to smoke a cigarette.

Lord Cowley concluded his remarks with the following observation:

In the peculiar state of affairs in France to-day, I am less afraid of the big political questions than of minor points of personal susceptibility. Great difficulties can be smoothed over on account of the general interests involved. But the little ones may rankle. Napoleon attaches more importance to matters affecting his vanity than to those which concern the interests of his country. He allows himself to be influenced by everything personal to himself. In this he betrays a pettiness of mind which is in contrast to his other qualities. Undoubtedly he is not the mediocrity which he formerly was supposed to be, but neither has he the qualities with which he is credited to-day. . . .

Here is another extract from a despatch of Baron Brunnow's of an earlier date, 25th January, 1853.

The marriage of Louis Napoleon with Mlle. de Montijo is regarded in England as simply one more incident in a career in which nothing is foreseen because it is all so entirely irregular and fantastic. From the point of view of politics all serious-thinking people are of one opinion—they do not believe that this union contracted from caprice or pique is calculated to give dignity to Louis Napoleon's power, nor contribute towards the permanence of his reign. In aristocratic social circles where Mlle. de Montijo was very cordially received during her stay in London a year ago, people ask themselves whether this marriage is sufficiently eligible to justify their felicitations. With the general public the views of the newspapers have usually the weight of a judicial opinion, and I notice a certain satisfaction exhibited at the spectacle of the majesty of the throne setting aside the rules of dynastic convention and preferring a marriage of inclination to a royal alliance. *The Times* is inspired with this idea, which is a reflex of a democratic tendency popularly intelligible to the masses. Finally all those who retain any sympathy for the cause of royalty in France, whether in favour of the senior branch of the House of Bourbon, or of the Orleans family, regard the marriage of Louis Napoleon as the first backward step, tending to bring about his redescent from the position in which fortune had placed him.

In a memorandum dated 5th February, 1853, Baron Brunnow

reports particulars of a short visit to the court at Windsor and, speaking of his interview with Queen Victoria, states:

H.M. inquired with lively interest after the health of H.M. the Empress and of Mme. the Grand-Duchess Maria Nicolaevna.

She told me of the surprise which the announcement of the marriage of Mlle. de Montijo had given her. This lady went to a fancy-dress ball at Buckingham Palace a year ago, *but the Queen does not remember to have noticed her on that occasion.*

Louis Napoleon's allusion to the marriage of the Duchess of Orleans had greatly pained the Queen. Her sentiments towards the Orleans family had been further strengthened by their adversity. She neglects no efforts to soothe them in their affliction by repeated marks of attention and regard.

It was of deliberate purpose that H.M. had invited the Duke and Duchess of Nemours to spend a few days at Windsor whilst the marriage of Louis Napoleon was being solemnised at Paris.

I learned that there had recently been some question of a special mission of courtesy to England with which the son of Prince Jerome was to have been charged. The ground was preliminarily carefully explored here. The reply was politely declinatory.

Previous to his marriage Napoleon had himself betrayed the intention of paying a brief visit to London. Possibly he desired, by his presence at the Court of England, to counterbalance the sympathies which the latter manifested in favour of the Orleans family. However, as this project met with no sort of encouragement, it appears to have been dropped for the present.

The relations between Queen Victoria and Napoleon III. and his consort had undergone a change indeed by the time of the Exhibition of 1867.

But to return to my personal impressions of Paris. We arrived in the winter and put up at the Hôtel de Lille et d'Albion. In England I had first seen and appreciated a warming-pan, but in Paris there was not even a fire; central heating had not then been invented, and at the Hôtel de Lille et d'Albion the bedrooms were provided with an artistic apparatus, which some people no doubt thought pretty, but which gave out no heat. It consisted of a number of metal

tubes painted to look like logs of birch-wood, from the notches of which proceeded tiny jets of flaming gas. This apparatus was fitted in the fireplace, and any heat which the gas may have generated incontinently proceeded up the chimney, so that the air of the room was not vitiated, neither was it warmed.

Years later I was told the reason for the installation of this absurd system. Once upon a time, also in the winter, it appears that the two brothers Tennyson stayed at this hostelry, so largely patronised by the English. They had engaged a sitting-room and after luncheon, while Frederick took a nap on the sofa, Alfred went out to pay a call. Before leaving he asked the waiter in his best French to see that the fire did not go out. The waiter gave him a knowing look and nodded intelligently. On his return he found to his consternation a terrible altercation in progress between his brother and a posse of waiters. As Alfred Tennyson entered the room Frederick shouted at him indignantly: "What do you mean by telling the waiter I was a lunatic?" It turned out that the great poet, whose French was less perfect than his versification, instead of telling the waiter: "*Veillez que le feu ne s'éteint pas,*" had said: "*Ne laissez pas sortir le fou.*" To avoid a repetition of so unfortunate an incident, gas fires had been introduced.

Paris was a never-ending source of delight to me. In the Champs-Élysées and the Tuileries Gardens a perpetual fair appeared to be going on for the delectation of children. There were real Punch and Judy shows, Charivari they were called, much more elaborate and artistic than I had seen in London, and there were merry-go-rounds, and delightful little carts drawn by two goats. And the people! The *nounous* with their wonderful head-dresses, the fierce *Zouaves* and fiercer *Turcos*, the monks in their sandalled feet, with knotted cords, with which they were supposed to flagellate themselves, hanging from their waists (but looking so new and immaculate that I could not believe they were ever used for anything but

ornament), and with hoods on their backs, bareheaded, tonsured and plump. Then there was the rue de Rivoli with its toy-shops, and the numerous arcades which had not become deserted and dilapidated as they are now, but were bright with shops and people. The English were in great evidence even then, and the banking firm of John Arthur at the corner of the rue Castiglione and the rue de Rivoli was a great resort. Mr. John Arthur himself, an imposing gentleman with bushy black whiskers and clean shaven upper-lip, was the perfect type of a Victorian banker.

Of course we saw all the sights, went to the Invalides, where the remains of Napoleon the Great lie buried, and visited the Louvre. What interested me particularly was the Arc de Triomphe on the top of which was a sentry who looked down all the avenues that radiate from that centre and was supposed to give the alarm in the event of a rising of the people. This impressed itself on my mind and brought home to me how insecure Napoleon III. still felt on his throne. The Republic abolished the sentry. I was told that the whole object of the Hausmannisation of Paris was to make street fighting less convenient for the people. In the middle of all the gaiety and careless happiness of the streets, one was constantly reminded of the possibility of revolution. It was very thrilling to a small boy.

We were so fortunate as to be in Paris during the carnival, and I still remember the *mardi gras* procession with the car drawn by oxen with gilded horns and the resplendent Queen of Beauty. Everywhere one heard the French horn being played to the tune of *Le bon roi Dagobert*; that strange weird music haunts me still, it sounded so absolutely ridiculous.

The streets were full of strange people, men with heavy beards in the costume of Catherine de Medici with skirts and hoops, and there was one delightful person in the Champs-Élysées dressed as an *incroyable*, in a black swallow-tailed coat, knee-breeches, and an enormous black silk hat, who carried a huge green umbrella under one arm and a gargantuan slice of

bread and butter in his hand, and was singing funny songs interspersing them with patter and making all manner of jokes to the infinite delight of the children.

We walked through the Opera and had a look at the beautiful ladies dressed for the great costume ball. Among these I heard a group speaking English and cried: "Look, there are English ladies." These ladies were attired in knee-breeches and eighteenth-century costumes. On hearing my comment they said: "Yes, my dear, we are English, come and talk to us," but I was hustled away.

It so happened that we needed the services of a dentist and were recommended to a remarkable American of the name of Holt. He was a very dapper little man who was proud of his small and beautiful feet, and wore patent leather boots and a natty blue serge suit. He had bright beady black eyes, a hard, rather cruel mouth, black hair, parted in the middle and hanging over his ears, and a small tuft-like black pointed beard. This little tyrant, for such he was, had a meek long-suffering wife and a large family of children. He made them all work, and even the baby of two years old had to pull a cake by a string before it was given its supper and allowed to go to bed. One day, while I was waiting for my turn, I heard the most fearful yells proceeding from his torture chamber. Presently his eldest boy, a weedy little chap of eight, emerged. I asked him compassionately whether his father had been hurting him much, and he told me that this monster had just brought a new grinding-machine and had been testing it on his little boy's teeth!

To my great regret our stay in Paris was short, but brief as it was, and in spite of my tender years, it made a great impression on my plastic brain. I am glad I saw that great capital of pleasure when it was at its zenith, and before the drab Republic had tarnished its tinsel which looked like gold. I was too young to understand the tragedy of it, although the knowledge that the Second Empire was, as it were, dancing on a

volcano, was in the air. The possibility of riots and revolution seemed to be ever present in the minds of all. But what was patent, on the surface, and plainly visible to my infantile eyes, was the brightness and splendour of the streets, the apparently care-free merriness of the people, the general atmosphere of prosperity and happiness. In later years I frequently revisited the *ville lumière*, and was on each occasion struck by the greater sobriety of the people, the look of care and worry on so many faces, the air of pompous dulness of the rich, the conscious respectability of the bourgeois, and the pinched and anxious look of the working-classes, especially of the numerous work-girls.

We broke our journey at Cologne, from whence we made numerous excursions to the many places of interest on the Rhine, which had not yet been transformed into a region of factories, a sort of Black Country, as it is at present. Here we saw Roland's Eck and Koenig's Winter, and the famous Mause Thurm, etc. At one of the numerous castles there was an echo of which the titled owner was very proud. A *nouveau riche*, who had visited the place, was anxious to show his friends that he also possessed such a curiosity, and invited them to his country-house to hear it. He had placed one of his servants among some shrubs where he was completely concealed from view and had told him to repeat whatever he might hear him say. When his guests arrived he took them to the spot and shouted out: "Echo, are you there?" to which the "echo" obediently replied: "Yes, sir." ("Ja wohl, Herr Baron!")

The hotel we had been recommended to stay at was called the "Gasthaus zu den Drei Koenigen," and was kept by a man who rejoiced in the name of Flaschentraeger, Bottle-carrier, very appropriate for an inn-keeper.

At this hotel we all dined at the *table d'hôte*. One day there came to this inn a very elegant and refined exquisite, who attracted the admiration of all the ladies. At dinner, after the fish had been served, he called the waiter and ordered a bottle

of wine, remarking delicately: "The fish must swim." This had been overheard by a great, big, coarse, bully of a man, who had eyed the new-comer with looks of hatred and jealousy. Determined not to be outdone by this effeminate dandy, he waited his opportunity, presently beef was served, whereupon the vulgar brute also called the waiter. "Beer!" he shouted, "the ox wants to swill."

The Rhine was even then full of craft, although the long trains of huge barges had not yet arrived. The small cargo-carrying ships of that time were in charge of quaint skippers, the heroes of many legends. They were generally uncouth and unpolished, and most of the stories refer to their awkward clumsiness of speech. The following is a sample. One of these skippers had come to pay his attentions to his *fiancée*, who placed a succulent meal before him which she had prepared with her own fair hands. The honest skipper did but scant justice, however, to her culinary skill, and, on her remonstrating with him for eating so little, replied, desiring to pay her a compliment: "At sight of you, my dear, I lose all appetite."—This might have been expressed differently!

In the 'sixties the Rhineland was, as it is now, a Catholic country, with this difference, that it had not as yet been touched by "modern progress." German "Kultur" was not the strident all-consuming force it is to-day, in other words every German who pretended to any degree of culture, was not a declared unbeliever in anything else but Mammon. To-day there are on the Rhine densely populated working-class districts in which there are no churches at all, and large Protestant colonies as well. But in the 'sixties nearly the whole population, especially the poorer sections of it, were Roman Catholic. There was then a fierce antagonism between the official Prussian Protestants and the native Rhenish Catholics, a state of things not very unlike conditions in Ireland.

The Catholic religion was much more in evidence then, especially in Cologne, than it is to-day, and it contributed very

much to the picturesqueness of life. Cardinals and bishops were quite common, and so were monks and nuns. What particularly appealed to childish instincts were the processions, with choristers and priests, followed by large trains of parishioners, some of which carried banners and sacred images, and all of them chanting. The malevolent Protestants used to maintain that this chanting was not always strictly orthodox. Thus I was told how one worthy and pious devotee who was carrying a beautiful and freshly lacquered image of the Virgin Mary, in his anxiety to chant something, but being entirely ignorant of the church service, was heard to intone most impressively:

"Gebenedeite, gebenedeite, Mutter Maria, die Du neu lackiert worden bist!" ("Oh! blessed Mother, Mary, Thou who has been freshly lacquered!")

Although our stay in Cologne was short, that quaint old city impressed itself on my memory. Modern Cologne is a very different place, for the building of the Ring-Strasse, with its rows of pretentious but uninteresting blocks of flats, has quite altered the character of that old cathedral town, which boasted of its fifty-two separate eau-de-Cologne firms, and its fifty-two well-defined stinks. The Ring-Strasse was the Stadt-Graben, it was part of the old fortifications, and abounded in foliage, lawns, or grass-plots, and fine old trees. The town itself was historic, as the names of the streets, *e.g.*, Unter fetten Hennen, Agrippiner-Strasse, Auf-der-alten Mauer, still imply. But modern "Kultur," with its scant veneration for antiquity, while making Cologne a more comfortable and sanitary town, has also made it much less interesting.

On our leisurely journey to Russia we stopped at two more halting-places, Hanover and Koenigsberg. Hanover had been but recently annexed to Prussia and had not yet assumed that barrack-like appearance which all German towns which have felt the heavy hand of "Kultur" now possess. It was a fine, dignified eighteenth-century city, somewhat rococo in style,

as regards its public buildings, of which Hanoverians were justly proud. Fine and spacious as the streets were, they had but little traffic, for trade and industry were still undeveloped. A foreigner who was being shown over the town was asked by a patriotic Hanoverian what he thought of the capital.

"It is a beautiful city," he replied, "but so desolate! Other capitals swarm with people."

"Look! Look!" cried the patriotic Hanoverian. "Look round the corner. There is one of them swarming already!"

The Hanoverians took a long time to get reconciled to Prussian rule, and very drastic measures were taken by the conquerors to ensure loyalty. Gendarmes were sent all over the country to visit the farms and villages and instil the Prussian spirit. One of these gendarmes entering a farm-house found only an old woman in the place. With the usual fierceness of his kind he addressed her in admonitory tones.

"Well," he said, "how are you all here? All good loyal subjects, eh? *Preussisch gesinnt?* (Prussian-minded?)"

"Oh! yes!" the old woman answered tremulously. "We are all good Prussians, all except the chickens."

"The chickens? What do you mean?"

"You see, they will lay Hanoverian eggs, white and yellow, we have been unable to induce them to lay black and white, Prussian eggs."

Koenigsberg, tne home of Kant, presented few objects of interest to me. But there we met an irate Prussian General whose hatred of England quite took my breath away. He was particularly eloquent in his denunciation of English breakfasts. He had once stayed in an English country-house, and described with indignation how the sons of the family each used to have beef-steaks, ham and eggs, bread and marmalade at that early meal. I think he exaggerated, but at any rate for a German to accuse the English of gluttony was for the pot to call the kettle black.

CHAPTER V

RUSSIA IN THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER II

RUSSIA when I first went there, towards the end of the 'sixties, was a land of hope and promise. The peasants had been freed from a condition of bondage which was not much better than that of the negro-slaves of the United States, whose emancipation took place at a time so proximate as to justify the feeling, then prevalent all over the world, that humanity was steaming, full-speed ahead, straight for the millennium.

The millennium has not been reached yet, though more than half a century has passed since then, and in some respects it seems to be further off than ever.

But I was too young in those days to scent that fragrant perfume of optimism with which the moral atmosphere was than laden. What interested me then, and aroused my wonder, was the panorama of the streets and the curious blending or merging into each other of East and West, of Asia and Europe. Here were Byzantine churches of whose Eastern origin there could be no doubt, cheek by jowl with rococo palaces, and reproductions of some of the finest examples of the Italian renaissance. Nor was the blending brought about by juxtaposition only, in many cases it was effected by actual intimate mixture, to use a chemical expression. Then the costumes of the people! At first, to the untrained eye, it was very difficult to distinguish the sexes in the lower classes. In no country is this so difficult, except perhaps in the Highlands of Scotland; even in China in pre-revolution days it was easy, for the men wore flowing gowns and the women trousers. In Russia, however, in the winter both men and women wear a nondescript

garment of sheepskin or frieze, with a sash round the middle, felt footwear reaching to the knees, and, in the case of the women, a thick woollen shawl worn like a hood over the head and tucked into the sheepskin, whilst the men frequently wore a hood called a *bashlik*, which completely covered their faces. In that climate it is indeed necessary to keep the face well covered, otherwise nose and ears are apt to get frozen.

Then there were the uniforms. The officers looked like flamboyant caricatures of the Prussian variety, but whereas the Prussian officers in those days carried a quiet unostentatious side-sword, all the Russian officers then wore clanking sabres and spurs, and made a tremendous clatter and jingle as they walked. Curiously enough, while William II. introduced the rattling sabre, Alexander III. abolished it. Little things like these are often significant.

We had a very quaint instance of the simplicity and true politeness of Alexander II. One day as we were walking in the park (the Winter-Garden), shortly after our arrival, we met a handsome officer strolling by himself along the middle of the path who gave a look of amused surprise to see that my father had evidently no intention of moving to the side for him. With an indulgent and graceful smile he turned from his straight course and thus made room for us to keep to the centre. When he had passed, it suddenly struck my father that the officer bore a strong facial resemblance to the Emperor, and so he went up to the nearest policemen and ascertained from him that it was indeed the Tsar whom we had thus compelled to deviate from his course.

If the ordinary officers looked like travesties of Prussian guardsmen, the Cossacks were absolutely Oriental in appearance, especially those of the Life-Guards in their red coats, scimitars, and strange high fur caps.

One of my earliest memories of St. Petersburg was being taken to see Madame Olga Novikoff who was then in the full

bloom of beautiful womanhood and a very gracious person with an indescribable charm of manner, magnificent eyes and dazzlingly white teeth. She had a *salon* at that time which was frequented by all that was brilliant and intellectual in the capital. One of its most striking ornaments was her brother, of whom I still have the vision before my eyes, in his magnificent uniform with jack-boots and buckskins, an extraordinarily handsome man.

Some years later, in Moscow, where he obtained a university appointment, my father had a rather unpleasant experience in which Madame Novikoff played an involuntary part. An impresario had brought to the Nijni Novgorod Fair a troop of English chorus girls, but unfortunately, failing to make his show a success, bolted, and left the poor girls stranded in Nijni Novgorod, where it seems their conduct was not calculated to contribute to the prestige of Great Britain. Our British Vice-Consul, Mr. Frederick Leslie, a wealthy engineer and a very patriotic Englishman, had them rescued from their undesirable surroundings and brought to Moscow, pending their departure for England. One of these young women made the acquaintance in Moscow of a charming and benevolent elderly English lady, and explained to her that she had no desire to return to her native land or to continue in the theatrical profession. She was well-educated and thought she might have a chance of getting appointed as governess to a Russian family. The case was mentioned to my father as a very deserving one, and, on the strong recommendation of the above-mentioned elderly English lady, my father consulted Madame Novikoff who took a great interest in the stranded English girl and promised to see what she could do for her, asking her to write her a letter stating what her qualifications and accomplishments were. The English girl wrote the required letter, but she was not the sweet innocent maid she pretended to be, as a matter of fact she was conducting a correspondence with a young and

wealthy merchant whose heart she had conquered at Nijni Novgorod and whose friendship, romantically commenced on the Volga, she was hoping to renew on his return to Moscow. By a coincidence this young man's name was also Novikoff, not an uncommon patronymic in Russia, and at the same time as she was writing a dutiful letter to Madame Olga Novikoff, she also penned an entirely different epistle, breathing love and passion, to the young merchant! Not being familiar with the Russian language, she obtained the services of a friend to address the envelopes, and by an unfortunate mistake the application for a situation as nursery-governess was sent to the lover, and the passionate and erotic effusion found its way to Madame Olga Novikoff, a *grande dame* to her finger tips. It was rather awkward for my father!

Moscow was fruitful in such quaint incidents. On another occasion there arrived in that town a typical, virtuous and thrifty Scot, in a tweed suit and thick shoes; he had red whiskers and beautiful pink cheeks and blue eyes. Chastity, of the rugged British kind, was written all over him. He had conceived the idea of exploring the Amur River; but though on exploration bent he had, like the celebrated Mrs. Gilpin, a frugal mind, and so it had occurred to him that he might be able to find in Russia an English-speaking fellow-traveller, who would be prepared to share the expenses of the journey. He therefore presented himself at the British Consulate and unfolded his plans to the kindly Mr. Leslie, who adopted the simple and obvious course of putting an advertisement in the newspapers. Persons willing to entertain the idea were requested to call at the Consulate on a certain day. One may judge of the Scot's surprise to find assembled, at the appointed time, a bevy of fascinating young ladies who had mis-read the advertisement, and had never heard of the Amur River but were presumably well versed in *amour*.

Mr. Leslie's predecessor in the vice-consulship had been a

young Englishman of great promise and many accomplishments, whose expenses unfortunately exceeded his income. Finally he concealed himself from his creditors and was maintained like a London Hospital, by voluntary contributions in the form of game-pies, sardines, and *pâtés de foie gras*. This state of things could not last, and so this amiable young gentleman was superseded.

The English Church at that early date had not yet been built, but services were conducted in a fine old Russian seigneurial mansion standing detached in a spacious courtyard, one side of which was the dwelling-place of the parson, the Rev. R. G. Penny. The other had been fitted up as a very comfortable place of worship with pews, pulpit and communion table all complete. The church belonged to the Russia Company by whom the clergyman was appointed and paid. The services were therefore Church of England. The congregation, which consisted of the owners and managers of outlying factories, merchants and their clerks, governesses and tutors, was largely nonconformist and presbyterian. Hence much friction. The leading member of the congregation, who was a fine old Scot, with a large family, used to show his disapproval of the proceedings by stamping out of the church, followed by his sturdy belongings, at the close of the service, when the clergyman pronounced the objectionable invitation to pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here on earth. He always paused after making the invitation so as to allow the demonstration to proceed without interrupting the prayers. Mr. Penny, a fine hearty English gentleman of about forty, was a great character. When he read himself in on his appointment he told the congregation that he had been sent to conduct the services in accordance with the Church of England ritual, and that neither man nor devil would deter him from his purpose.

Talking of church ritual reminds me of a story which I have

never seen in print, which General Sir James Wolfe-Murray once told me of Lord Cardigan. His lordship asked a clergyman to explain to him what all this fuss about ritualism was over?

"Well, my lord, it is mainly a question of vestments."

"Vestments!" said Lord Cardigan explosively. "What are your regulations?"

"I am afraid there are no regulations," the clergyman replied meekly.

"What! No regulations! Good God! What a service!"

But to return to Mr. Penny, he would certainly have made an excellent soldier. He was once told that it was a pity his father had not made him an officer of dragoons, to which he replied:

"I wish to God he had."

He was, nevertheless, very popular, although he was far from mealy-mouthed. Meeting a rather self-indulgent member of the congregation who had a reputation which had ruined his health, Mr. Penny asked him how he was.

"Ah! there's no peace for the wicked," was the answer!

"Then, of course, there can't be any peace for you," Mr. Penny retorted.

Mrs. Penny was a very charming woman, very worldly and fashionable, and much more like the wife of a garrison officer than that of a parson.

She had an English maid, who used to perpetrate sundry quaint malapropisms. Thus one day she rushed in to her mistress who was still in bed and cried: "Please, mum, the men have come to masticate the floors!" What she really meant to say was that the men had come to put mastic on the floors. Every week the floors of Russian houses used to be polished with cobbler's wax, and once a month they were varnished.

When Mr. Penny went on his holidays in the summer, we

used to have globe-trotting parsons to conduct the services for us. These usually stayed at a hostelry now occupied, I believe, by the terrible Tcheka, the Extraordinary Commission. This was the Hôtel Bilot. I remember one of these itinerant parsons, an Ulsterman with a terrible brogue, who had preached a sermon that had made my flesh creep, accosting me after the service and fixing me with his penetrating blue eyes:

"Young gintlemin," he said in sepulchral tones, "do you know the way to the hot Ell below?"

With his terrible sermon still fresh in mind, I involuntarily shuddered, and then with a flash it suddenly dawned upon me that he only wanted to get back to his inn!

Mr. Penny's sermons were commendably short, especially when he had roast sucking-pig for luncheon, a dish of which he was uncommonly fond!

The German Church was a much more imposing structure than our own. The pastor was a very worthy and pious cleric, tall and thin, who had been distinguished by the Emperor and received a decoration of which he was so proud that he wore it on all occasions, even when conducting divine service. The envious sneered at this ostentation and used to say that while Christ bore His cross humbly on His back, Pastor Dyckhoff wore it proudly on his breast! Even the poor man's name was made fun of and pronounced Dick-Kopf, thick-head.

If St. Petersburg suggested a blend of East and West, how much more so Moscow! In St. Petersburg the garish barbaric splendour of the streets seemed to strike an Oriental note at once. Nevertheless, the Orientalism of the capital was more spectacular and superficial than real. After all, St. Petersburg was planned and built as a European city here and there reminiscent of Holland and Germany, with a breath of Venice. The splendid palaces along the quays, the picturesque position of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, the gilt spire of the Admiralty, the numerous canals, the interminable Nevsky

Prospect, all these had a distinctly European aspect. But Moscow! Moscow was essentially Oriental in appearance; under Bolshevik rule it has become more Oriental still. Here East and West meet, but the background is Eastern. The gorgeous Kremlin, the great bazaar, the dwellings of the old aristocracy, standing in their own grounds, and surrounded by high walls, even the badly paved streets, all are Oriental. I have since visited many Eastern cities, particularly Constantinople, Peking and Tabriz, and in all of them I felt that the truly typical Oriental city was Moscow.

Society also was strangely blended and intermixed, but two opposite tendencies stood out in sharp relief. One was progressive and European, the other reactionary and Asiatic. The one current of thought was set towards the West, the other was just as determinedly striving to return to the ancient traditions of the semi-Oriental times which existed before the advent of Peter the Great. Many Russians, especially at that time, felt a sort of homesickness for the old customs of their ancestors, what the French wittily describe as a *nostalgie de la boue*. Of course I was too young to sense this consciously, but as I look back I can see its presence. There was, perhaps, no sharp and definite line of cleavage. Some of the reactionaries were distinctly European in their sympathies; all for material prosperity, new inventions and modern improvements; and many of the Liberals were Slavophil in their sentiments, and anxious to preserve the old customs, such as the *mir*, or village commune. But, for the sake of convenience, Russian society may be said to have been divided into two opposite camps, the Oriental and the Western. The Conservative Progressive element was represented largely, though not entirely, by the Baltic Barons, who, often quite unconsciously, were mainly under German influence. To these must be added the very considerable German commercial community, which, although mostly non-political, nevertheless looked down upon the in-

digenous Russians, and all they stood for, with the supercilious contempt of a superior race. The Russian Liberals, who subsequently developed into the Cadet (Constitutional Democrat, K.D.) party, on the other hand drew their inspiration chiefly from England. French influence was æsthetic and artistic rather than political.

The universities of course played a great part in the intellectual life of the country. Here the German model was followed, but English ideas were very prevalent. Even among the professors there was a strong national and anti-foreign-influence party. Russia was at that time in a most interesting and critical stage of evolution. The serfs had not only been liberated but had been granted land which they held on communal tenure. Trial by jury had been introduced, and justices of the peace, unpaid, had been appointed to watch over the interests of the peasants and settle their disputes. Zemstvos had been constituted, local government boards for the administration of local affairs, to which peasants could be and were elected. The universities were given autonomous powers, and the professors elected their colleagues as vacancies occurred. Education was in the air, and the higher training of women was one of the planks in the Liberal platform. All that was wanted to turn Russia into a thoroughly democratic country was freedom of speech, freedom of the press and constitutional government.

The great reforms of Alexander II. had been virtually effected by a stroke of the pen, there had been no bloodshed, no conflict. These reforms had satisfied nobody, in the eyes of some they went too far, in the opinion of others they did not go far enough. They suffered from the inherent defect of having been freely granted from above. They had not been achieved by conflict, they had not been striven for, they were, so to speak, heaven-born. Moreover, they were pure acts of grace, they were arbitrarily conferred, they could be, and

indeed many of them subsequently were, arbitrarily withdrawn, there were no guarantees. It seems to be a law of nature, that what people do not themselves work and strive for, they do not value. And so it was with the reforms of Alexander II. Nor should this cause surprise, for Alexander II. had begun at the wrong end. He gave the people, voluntarily, all the liberties which in other countries they had conquered. And, moreover, he gave them the institutions and laws which were the results of self-government in Western Europe without giving them the means of maintaining and adjusting them. He should have given them representative government, and the rest would have come of itself. Why did Alexander II. begin at the wrong end? Why did he not grant his people self-government at once? It was not against his principles to do so. Alexander I., his uncle, had coquetted with the idea of founding a Duma, and Speransky actually drafted a constitution for him. Nicholas I., according to Baron Korff, was not averse to representative government, and even tried to train his ministers to debate. Indeed, so far from having any fundamental objection to constitutional government, it is generally believed that Alexander II. had actually approved a draft of a constitution and would have signed it, had he not been assassinated. Alexander II. was a liberal-minded monarch who had been brought up by the poet, Joukovsky, on Western Liberal ideas, but he was not a Russian and he did not understand his people, that was his misfortune. Besides, his father had taught him to distrust them.

The Emperors of Russia were of German blood, and German in training. They were greatly influenced in their political ideas by the example of the neighbouring country of Prussia to the rulers of which they were closely related. Now nobody can deny that Prussia was well and efficiently governed, but it is a common error to believe that what is sauce for the goose will prove to be equally suitable sauce for the gander. The

German and the Russian people are totally different in temperament, mentality and physique. The Germans are a docile race, easy to govern, and they have centuries of evolution behind them. The Russian peasant, while he revered his Emperor, hated his government as fiercely as any free-born Britain hates bureaucracy.

The Russians had been accustomed for centuries to be governed by terror. They had got to regard terror as the normal attribute of power. It was dangerous to remove that terror without giving them the means of self-discipline. But to expect a German-trained Emperor to grant his people freedom of the press was to expect too much. Criticism is one of the most difficult things to bear. Yet what was the use of encouraging higher education whilst withholding permission to give expression to the ideas this higher education had awakened, and affording no arena in which subversive theories could be met, combated and refuted? The inevitable result was secret criticism, underground subversive attack, and finally revolution. The priesthood were impotent, for they were virtually prohibited to preach. They were but the officials of the church, a religious bureaucracy.

Politics being taboo, everybody perforce became a politician in disguise. There were political doctors and political artists, political dramatic critics and political novelists. The Rector of the University, Tikhonravov, was a sort of president of a republic of learning, and ladies' drawing-rooms became political debating-grounds.

In this hot-bed of theory and criticism I grew up. By the time I was twenty I was more than half a Nihilist. A learned professor had proved to me that there could be no God, because, as he said, like can only create like, and therefore spirit could not create matter. Obviously he had not read Swedenborg.

The professors at Moscow University were men of great

distinction. There was fat good-natured Maxim Kovalevski, who lived to be the leader of a party in the Duma, and who knew all there was to know of English legal lore. A profound scholar and an accomplished man of the world and *bon-vivant* at the same time. He was a country gentleman of considerable private means who had made a hobby of the study of law. Then there was Nicholas Storojenko, the author of the best life of Robert Greene, who was professor of foreign literature, and possessed a wide and curious knowledge of the early French and English Elizabethan writers. I still have a letter of his in my possession terminating quaintly: "yours truly Wednesday evening." Of Professor Korsch and Professor Guerrier it need only be said that their names are still household words in Russia. Guerrier was especially popular for instituting and conducting University Extension Lectures for girls. Another great figure was Urosoff, called the Rhinoceros because he had discovered a fossil mammoth of this species in Siberia, and was moreover of gigantic proportions. He was great on sanitation, and ascribed the migratory habits of the Russian peasants to an absence of sanitation in the villages, which, he maintained, were abandoned when they became unfit for human occupation. "How can you civilise such people?" he would exclaim. Stolyetoff, a brother of the general of Central Asiatic fame of that name, was professor of mathematics, and was a man of exquisite refinement and almost lady-like manners. But the most interesting members of the university were the two Solovievs, father and son. Soloviev senior was the great historian of whom it was said that he was so methodical that he produced annually a volume of his history and an addition to the population, and with great regularity alternately a boy and a girl. Vladimir Soloviev, his son, was known as the philosopher. He was an ascetic and a mystic, a spiritualist, who was the weirdest figure imaginable, tall and almost transparently thin with a wax-like complexion, long black hair, luminous bright dark eyes, and

dazzling teeth like ivory. He created some sensation by publishing a treatise entitled *Three Forces*, in which he set forth that the three great world-forces were Mahommedanism, Western Civilisation, and Slavism. The first had spent itself and was dying, the second was false and effete, and it was therefore the destiny of the third to regenerate the world. He was much ridiculed by the Westerners, but among the Slavophils he was a great light. A charming man with the delicate sensibilities of a woman, he had strange mystical experiences to relate. Thus, for instance, in the house of a great friend of his, a Princess Shakhovskoy, whom we also knew, he averred that the piano always played automatically whenever a member of the family died.

The leading journalist was M. Katkov, who had commenced his career as an advanced Western Liberal. By a very astute move he had secured the official publication of the university, the *Moscow Gazette*, and turned it into an ordinary newspaper. It rapidly became the leading daily paper of Russia, until the appearance in St. Petersburg of the *Novoye Vremya*, or *New Times*, which speedily out-distanced it. Sarcastic people used to say that while the *Novoye Vremya* wanted to be *The Times* of Russia it was really the *Daily Telegraph*, which was in those days a much more sensational and flamboyant journal than it is at present. On taking over the Moscow *Gazette*, and turning it from an official publication into a newspaper, M. Katkov definitely turned his back on his Liberal principles. He became, much to the disgust of his former friends and associates, a Slavophil Conservative, and his journal in some measure voiced the opinions with which M. Pobedonostzev was identified. It was generally believed that the brains of the paper and its incisive leading articles were supplied by M. Leontiev, a fanatical hunchback who was regarded as Katkov's *âme damné* and *porte-bonheur*. But the latter took full credit for his colleague's collaboration and virtually reaped all the rewards,

which in addition to pecuniary benefits included decorations and a great social position. It was again Leontiev who suggested and was the originator of the idea of founding a Lycée on English public-school lines, in which preference was given to the classics, and games, such as cricket and football, were taught. This Lyceum was supposed to provide an antidote to the revolutionary doctrines then very prevalent, and was under the patronage of the Heir Apparent, who, as the pupil of Pobedonostzev, was supposed to be at the head of the Slavophil movement, for which, however, he had really but little understanding. The school was designed for the education of the sons of the old Muscovite aristocracy, and the fees were high.

The other daily paper was Liberal, the *Russkya Vedomosti*, and run with great distinction, by a handsome old gentleman of culture, very much on the lines of the old *Daily News*.

Another interesting figure was Michael Kapoustine, Professor of International Law, a member of the Athenæum in London, who had his clothes made at Poole's, wore English ties and side-whiskers, and thought himself quite an Englishman. He was a friend of the late Lord Bryce, and all Englishmen who visited Russia were invariably provided with letters of introduction to him. To him came Hepworth Dixon and W. R. S. Ralston, and later Mackenzie Wallace. Kapoustine was subsequently appointed Rector of the Yaroslav Lycée, a sort of Law University, and it was at his official residence at Yaroslav that Mackenzie Wallace, who stayed with him as his non-paying guest for the best part of six years, wrote his famous book on Russia. Later Kapoustine was made educational administrator of the Baltic Provinces with the mission to Russianise those dependencies. On one of his visits to London I asked him how long he thought it would take him to effect this, thinking to pull his leg, for I knew the stubbornness of the local population, but he replied quite ingenuously without the least hesitation:

"I think,—so about—three years!"

That answer struck me as sublime.

Kapoustine was married to a daughter of a Dr. Toporov, a very interesting lady, who regarded herself as a *femme incomprise* and spoke Russian, French, German and English with equal volubility, but sometimes made curious mistakes. Thus she once asked me at dinner, when I was quite a small boy, whether I would have a slice of "Darkey hen"; she meant, turkey.

Every year the Kapoustines, who had no children, made a pilgrimage to England where they always stayed in the same lodgings in Old Cavendish Street, kept by a Miss White, whose charges were often complained of as unjust, especially the practice of charging for clean towels every day, which was considered unreasonable.

"I vash myself before I vipe myself," Mrs. Kapoustine would protest.

As years rolled on Madame Kapoustine discovered that the hard winters of Russia injured her health, and she therefore found it necessary to winter abroad.

The educational district in which Kapoustine served, that of Moscow, which included Yaroslav, was administered by a charming personality, a Prince Mestchersky, a *grand seigneur* of the old régime, with exquisite self-effacing manners. His wife was a Panine, daughter of the famous Count Panine, under whom the serfs had been liberated, and descendant of the Panine who had been Catherine the Great's Foreign Minister. This great lady was very scornful when she heard that Madame Kapoustine could not stand the winter climate of Russia, "and who is she, to give herself such airs? Only a Toporova!"

Princess Mestchersky was a great character. Like most Russians of good society she spoke nearly every European language with the fluency and correctness of a native, but occasionally she was unable to summon at her will the correct word she wanted to use in the language she was speaking,

but this did not trouble her. With the imperiousness of a *grande dame*, she made the equivalent word in another language do duty, and expected her hearers to understand her. Thus I remember her saying to me, as I was taking my leave:

"Good-bye; then I shall see you on Judy" (meaning Thursday).

She was, however, the kindest-hearted woman imaginable, and numerous were the benefits which her great wealth enabled her to confer on the unfortunate. Hers was a typical and voluminous Russian family with daughters one more beautiful than the other, and nice gentlemanly sons. These children are now, alas! refugees in strange lands where they are experiencing many undeserved hardships.

Prince Mestchersky had two failings in an otherwise blameless character. One was a strange habit of tracing the association of ideas. If anybody, with whom he was on sufficiently intimate terms, made a remark, he loved to examine him in order to ascertain what previous thoughts had led up to his last idea. This, it need not be said, was sometimes extremely inconvenient. Another curious habit of his was to change his boots continually. Whenever he travelled he took with him an enormous specially constructed portmanteau to contain the numerous pairs of boots which this habit made necessary. In other respects he was perfectly normal, and he was highly cultured.

A very different type of man was Count Lamsdorff, a great friend of my father's, the uncle of the late Foreign Secretary of that name and the administrator of the Imperial Estates in the Moscow district, with residence in the Kremlin. He was a man after my father's own heart and more like a Prussian guardsman of the old school than a Russian official. Extremely handsome, he bore a strong facial resemblance to the Emperor Nicholas I., though nothing like so tall, and was on terms of friendship with the Imperial family.

He was a man of great kindness of heart, but very manly

in his deportment. When Lord Radstock visited Russia to evangelise the people, his missionary lordship could think of nothing better than to placard the streets of Moscow with his religious appeals. This was of course disapproved of by the Orthodox Church, and, at the instigation of the priesthood, by the police, and Lord Radstock ran considerable risk of being incarcerated. He told my father his troubles and by the aid of Count Lamsdorff the police were induced to take a more indulgent view of his activities. Nevertheless, Count Lamsdorff, who was a stout believer in the tenets of the Orthodox Church, whole-heartedly repudiated Lord Radstock's solifidian creed. I remember his saying that duty was just as important as faith.

Lord Radstock, who was really a splendid Englishman, was indefatigable in his efforts and had much success in Russia; he even attempted the hopeless task of saving me, but I am afraid I found his methods unconvincing. One day at our house, he put a Testament on the table and turning to me said: "If you saw a lot of salvations lying about like this Testament, and knew that by picking one up you could save your soul, would you not do it?"

I could not persuade myself, however, that my eternal salvation could be secured in so easy and mechanical a manner.

During my boyhood in Moscow many great events occurred. The first of these was the Franco-German War. I well remember how everybody, especially military men, ignoring the lessons of the Austrian War, was convinced that the raw short-service Prussian conscript troops would have no chance against the veteran professional soldiers of France. They were soon disillusioned, and not long afterwards the Prussian system of universal service was introduced in Russia, much to the disgust of the old martinets who, as usual in all countries, vowed the service was going to the devil.

Another great event was the marriage of the Duke of

Edinburgh. Well do I remember the foreign princes who came to the wedding, which was of course celebrated in Moscow. The Duke himself came to the English church in full naval uniform and looked a sturdy Jack Tar. Very elegant and smart was Colonel Wellesley, who was later divorced by his wife, the daughter of Lord Augustus Loftus (the very image of Count Lamsdorff's daughter), married Kate Vaughan and lived to fill the distinguished position of Secretary to the Green Room Club, where in later years I met him.

Two of the foreign princes have stuck particularly in my memory. One was Umberto, Crown Prince of Italy, in a resplendent uniform with a magnificent plumed hat and a gorgeous red moustache. He was accompanied by his consort, the beautiful Princess Margherita. The other was the Crown Prince of Sweden, a tall, thin, spectacled, bearded, professorial looking young man in a strikingly simple blue uniform, relieved by the faintest trace of gold lace.

There were many lurid stories of the doings of these foreign princes and the young Russian Grand-Dukes respecting which it is more decorous to maintain a discreet silence.

The visit of the Shah of Persia was another event which impressed itself on my youthful mind. He was, of course, put up at the palace of the Kremlin, and Count Lamsdorff was instructed to show him special attention. On the first night just as the poor count had got to sleep the Shah summoned him to his presence. Count Lamsdorff jumped into his uniform and in great agitation rushed to the terrace where he was told the Shah was awaiting him. It was a clear moonlight night, and the Shah, pointing to a house on the opposite side of the river asked Count Lamsdorff, through his interpreter, to tell him to whom it belonged. As it happened the count had not the faintest idea who its owner might be, and had to make inquiries. The Shah had no other motive than idle curiosity for asking the question.

Among the ladies who graced the salons of Moscow there was one whom we will call Madame X., who had a phenomenally expansive figure. At the ball given by Prince Dolgoroukov, the Governor-General of Moscow, in honour of the Shah, this lady observed His Persian Majesty conversing with the prince's aide-de-camp and pointing at her. Very much intrigued, she took an opportunity of sounding the aide-de-camp as to what the Shah had said about her, but the latter got very confused and insisted that it was nothing. Madame X. would not be put off and at last elicited from the aide-de-camp that the Shah had expressed a desire to purchase her for his harem and had asked her price!

A very useful friend of my youth was the medical officer of the Opera, a genial disciple of Æsculapius, who had a fauteuil in what we should call the stalls, which he frequently very good-naturedly assigned to me. Here I heard all the best artists of the day, including Patti and Mazzini. Patti used to take her daily constitutional on the Tverskoy Boulevard attended by the Marquis de Caux, her husband, and Nicolini, her lover, one walking each side of her. Nicolini was a most picturesque looking person, with his pointed black beard, and his light brown fur-lined overcoat. Patti tripping between these two rivals reminded one of some sort of bird, with her diminutive figure and funny pigeon-footed rolling walk. However, in spite of her ungainly gait she was perfectly charming and her beautiful soft black eyes used to send a thrill into my susceptible bosom.

The next event of importance was the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War, which, I grieve to say, was as much mismanaged as any previous or subsequent war that Russia has undertaken. The men were insufficiently equipped and ill-fed, their boots were made of paper, the flour they used for bread was adulterated with lime, they had no warm winter clothing. That brilliant soldier, General Skobeloff, nearly ruined himself by

supplying the troops under his command with sheepskins at his own expense. The Emperor, who lived with his army and, to some extent, shared its hardships, was profoundly shocked by what he saw. I was told by people in his entourage that the saddening experience of that campaign took at least ten years off his life. Alexander II. was fifty-eight on the outbreak of the war and did not look his age. He was a fine martial figure, and just slightly inclined to be stout. But when the war was over he emerged from it a broken old man, thin, hollow-eyed, grizzled and careworn. A commission was appointed to inquire into the maladministration of the army, and several Grand-Dukes, to the Emperor's great distress, were found to be implicated, and disciplinary measures were applied to them.

The incident reminds me of the story of the eldest son of Alexander II. when a small boy, asking his uncle, the Grand-Duke Constantine, High Admiral of the Fleet, to show him a Russian battleship.

Constantine explained that he would have to go to Cronstadt to see one, whereupon the boy in his great disappointment, exclaimed:

"Why, papa said you had the whole Russian fleet in your pocket!"

Among the English worthies in Moscow was a man called Stockwell, whose father had been a surgeon in the Russian navy, and, with the toleration which distinguished Nicholas I., was permitted to remain in Cronstadt during the war. He told me that the splendid guns with which the Cronstadt forts were defended, were all of painted wood, and that if Sir Charles Napier had not believed that they were what they pretended to be he could have made short work of the place. The money for the guns had indeed been provided, only it had not been spent on the object for which it was intended. This may be only a yarn, but as I have known of so many similar cases I feel it ought to be true.

People do not know how near Russia was to defeat in her victorious war against Turkey. Her losses before Plevna alone, due to the foolhardy tactics of Skobeloff, have never been published. If General Todleben, the defender of Sebastopol, had not been dug out in the nick of time, the war might have ended very differently.

A great friend, a dare-devil young Russian officer, was the first to get into Kars, when that Turkish fortress was taken by storm (some people maintained that it was a financial and not a military operation) and received the St. George's Cross with sword for exceptional heroic courage. Of course he was wounded and put in hospital, but when he got well enough he wrote me a most delightful letter in which he assured me that he felt ashamed to accept this high decoration as he had not deserved it.

"What happened," he wrote, "was this. I was in such a beastly funk that I did not know what to do. I was too frightened to run away, for fear of being shot in the back, so I just shut my eyes and ran up the hill as fast as I could and so got there first, when a ruffian of a Turk hit me on the head, and that is all I remember."

Talking of Russian officers, a dear old retired major, whose girth had considerably increased after leaving the service, once told me the following experience. Being a loyal subject he was seized with a desire to present himself at court on the accession of Alexander II. So he went to St. Petersburg, and having satisfactorily arranged the necessary preliminaries proceeded to don his old uniform, but found it had grown inconveniently tight. However, he decided to suffer martyrdom and went to court. Just as he was approaching the Empress, and was bending over to kiss her outstretched hand, he was seized with a violent fit of sneezing which he vainly endeavoured to suppress, an explosion followed, his buttons parted and his belt and sabre came down on the parquet floor with a terrific crash amidst

the involuntary laughter of the assembled courtiers, the Emperor and Empress being both convulsed.

Many years afterwards I told this story to an old Indian officer, a General Graham, who stated that he had had a similar though more painful experience. On his return from India he went to a drawing-room. He had served in the Bengal Lancers and wore the brilliant light blue uniform of that regiment, but unfortunately, was suffering from sciatica. As he dropped on his knee to kiss the hand of Queen Victoria, he lost control of his muscles and felt himself sitting down on his spur, which was very uncomfortable. With great presence of mind he used the Queen's hand as a lever and thus succeeded in recovering control and raising himself. The Queen, who took in the situation, gave him an amused smile.

After the Russo-Turkish War a wave of Nihilism swept over the country. My friend, Professor Storojenko, in his usual doctrinaire way, explained it as follows:

"We have been fighting for the liberation of Bulgaria, and the Bulgarians have got a constitution, but we have not, of course we are discontented."

But the Nihilists would not have been content with a constitution. They were really Marxian Socialists, and their programme was the establishment of a Socialist republic very much like the one the Bolsheviks have inaugurated. Everybody who was anybody had his life threatened and it became a smart thing to say that one had received a denunciatory letter and went about in fear of one's life. If one's life was not worth taking one was evidently a person of no importance. The secret police were also very active, and people used to disappear mysteriously without leaving a trace behind. This fate befell a charming young lady for whom I nourished a hopeless passion. She was a Miss Dournovo, the niece of the Minister of the Interior. Being of a very benevolent disposition, she spent her time in what we should call district visiting and

especially in teaching ragged children. One day the police paid her a surprise visit and spirited her away. She was never heard of again in spite of the frantic efforts of her distracted and very influential father. Those were uncomfortable times.

Being a great admirer of Miss Dournovo I once paid her a delicate attention. Most of the houses of Moscow magnates had porters' lodges, on the door of which there was generally a metal plate with "dvornik" (house-porter) inscribed on it. The Dournovos' porter's lodge had no such plate, but at the adjoining house the plate on the porter's lodge was loose. One day I pulled it off and quietly popped it into the Dournovos' letter-box; great was my satisfaction next day to see that this had been duly affixed to their porter's lodge. Whether the original owners of the plate ever protested I have not to this day ascertained!

As a boy, I am afraid I was rather addicted to practical jokes. The landlord of the house we lived in, who occupied an adjacent building, was of German extraction and my special *bête noire*. He was very stingy, so I once sent him a lot of cart-loads of hay from the neighbouring haymarket, and he had to tip the vendors of the hay very heavily before they could be induced to go away. A valetudinarian, he had a great fear of death, and never went to bed, sleeping in his clothes, because, he said, if he once got into bed he was afraid he would never get out of it. Boys are very cruel and thoughtless, and I am afraid I gave him the greatest shock of his life when I sent him an undertaker to measure him for his coffin.

In spite of Nihilists and police, Moscow was a very pleasant place to live in then. Those were spacious times, and there was a charm and an ease about the old Muscovite aristocracy which made life delightful. Russians are curious people, they have a mentality all their own, but in those days at least, they were cosmopolitan and cultured. They lived in palaces amidst eighteenth-century furniture and works of art, and yet it was

possible for Turgeniev to make his Nihilist, Bazarov, when discussing a superannuated *petit-maître* in the depths of the country, ask: "For whose benefit does he shave himself so smoothly every day?" That is a question no Englishman would ask.

I had a great friend, who had been Russian Consul-General in Tabriz and Russian Commissioner in Turkestan, who told me with admiration how he had met English officials in desolate parts of the world such as the Gobi Desert, for instance, where they had had to live in their own tents without any European within hundreds of miles, who nevertheless regularly dressed for dinner every evening.

"That was splendid! But no Russian could do that," he maintained. "Leave a Russian in the desert and he lets himself go, he deteriorates."

The Russians are wonderfully introspective, they are marvellous at self-analysis. Every Russian educated man is a potential Dostoievsky, every Russian woman is somewhat of a Marie Bashkirtseff, but they have very little self-discipline, that is where the Oriental strain comes out. Their sense of humour is also different from ours. A very intellectual Russian once asked me what my favourite study was. Not being very scientific in my tastes, and with a view to an evasive answer, I replied:

"I hold with Pope that 'the proper study of mankind is man!'"

"Ah!" he said, "perhaps you are right, but I do not care for anatomy."

This curious literalism comes out in all sorts of unexpected ways. Many years ago a French scientist wrote a treatise to demonstrate that mushrooms were a noxious food. Now in Russia during Lent, when the orthodox fast, mushrooms constitute a very large part of the diet of the people, consequently the censorship prohibited this treatise.

The Russian peasant is kindly, when not roused, but when his passions are awakened he is transformed into a blind primeval force. Yet he is profoundly charitable and singularly free from self-righteousness. When he sees a criminal being escorted to prison he feels like John Bunyan and says to himself: "There, but for the grace of God, would I be." He regards offenders as unfortunates, he is generous to a fault, nevertheless he will beat his wife within an inch of her life and has been known to commit murder for the sake of a few coins. He is a strange contradiction. Nobody, however, who has lived long in Russia can help feeling an affectionate regard for the Russians, and love them for their many great human qualities, in spite of their faults, but then, what race of man is perfect? When the time came for me to leave that land in which I had spent my happy youth and where I had made so many real friends it was with a heavy heart, and I thought of the lines which Mary Stuart wrote on leaving her second home:

Adieu, plaisant pays de France,
Qui a nourri ma jeune enfance,
Adieu, France, adieu, nos beaux jours.

CHAPTER VI

LONDON IN THE 'EIGHTIES

I WAS sent to England not because there was no career for me in Russia, on the contrary I was in the foreign department of the largest, oldest and most solid of the banks of Moscow, and was doing extremely well, but because my father feared that I was getting Russianised, and so I was packed off. I need not have gone, only I had a horrible craving, which amounted to a vice, I wanted to become a successful novelist, and I felt that it was only in England that I could hope to graduate for such a vocation. Alas! vain dreams! *Où sont les neiges d'antan?* But although I looked forward with pleasurable anticipation to the struggle for life in the land which I regarded as my country, rejoicing "as a strong man to run a race," yet I felt sorrowful at leaving dear old Russia, that Russia which I was never to see again, for every time I revisited it in after years it seemed to me to have grown harder and less genial in the interval.

A well-found Wilson liner carried me to my ancestral shores. Being the youngest of the passengers I was placed by the Captain at the end of the table at meals, and never shall I forget the agony of having to carve a venerable boiled turkey, whose members refused to be severed, with, as I fancied, all the eyes of all the old spinsters (mostly governesses) on board fastened on me while the ship was rolling merrily all the time.

It was in the late summer of 1879 that I set foot on English soil; the times were extremely interesting, for the country was in a state of transition. After "advancing by leaps and bounds," as Mr. Gladstone had proclaimed, its prosperity had experienced one of the worst periods of depression the country has probably

ever lived through. There was a general atmosphere of gloom and despondency. We had not yet awakened to the consciousness of empire. "Perish India!" was the cry of an influential section of the Liberal party, and the colonies were looked upon as a nuisance. Moreover the democratisation of the aristocracy had only just begun. I was much amused by a remark of a fine English lady, tall and spare, with keen blue eyes, and as lithe as a girl, who had presented her husband with eighteen children, the eldest being twenty-two, and the youngest a baby in arms. Her husband was a Yorkshire squire, who looked more like an oak than a frail human being. He had held his modest estate in a direct line since the days of Queen Elizabeth, and could have passed for the materialised spirit of Sir Walter Raleigh in his picturesque Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers.

We were discussing the Wilsons who lived hard by at Tranby Croft, a place since become famous in the *chroniques scandaleuses* of the nineteenth century, when this lady told me their history, how the father and mother had risen from nothing. I must say I thought it very creditable.

"And now," she continued, "the Prince of Wales comes and stays with them, and they fancy themselves. But when they come among us (meaning the county families) we make them feel their position."

I had great difficulty in keeping a straight face, but reflected that no doubt the snubbing they got from the county was more galling to the Wilsons than the friendship of the Prince of Wales was gratifying. It could not redress the balance. All this is changed now. The head of the Wilson family is a peer of the realm, and there are many even less distinguished to keep him company. Did not Sir Albert Rollit marry the widow of a Duke of Sutherland?

My arrival in London threw my unhappy uncle into the utmost consternation. He was an unmarried curate in a poor parish off Tottenham Court Road and lived in rooms in

Keppel Street in the district then appropriately nicknamed "Gloomsbury." Thanks to tube-railways and motor-omnibuses and other improvements this region has been considerably brightened up of late, but in 1879 it was a terribly grimy and desolate part of London relegated to foreigners who came to study at the British Museum, and to shabby-genteel frumps, with a small sprinkling of people of the early-Victorian prosperous solicitor type, in whose female belongings Dickens discovered a resemblance to rocking-horses. The Natural History Museum had just been completed and the British Museum collection of stuffed animals had been but recently transferred to their new home. This removal had awakened the ire of a public-spirited member of parliament, who rose in the House to ask a question of the government as to why this educationally valuable series of natural-history object-lessons had been carted away to the inaccessible wilds of South Kensington. Everybody knew where Bloomsbury was, he protested, but South Kensington!—A fashionable member, I think it was the famous Bobby Spencer, afterwards Earl Spencer (who so unnecessarily disclaimed being an agricultural labourer), here interrupted the Speaker by asking: "Where is Bloomsbury?" to the utter confusion of the public-spirited one, and to the intense delight of my uncle, who read the report of these proceedings out to me.

My uncle was what I think Charles Lamb must have been like. He had a keen sense of humour, but was the gentlest, most harmless and kindliest of men. Very untidy and hopelessly unpunctual, absolutely incapable of understanding the value of money, scrupulously honest and always dissatisfied with himself and his fancied shortcomings, he was very tolerant of the faults and moral infirmities of others. Sincerely pious and unaffectedly humble, he was yet possessed of a great nervous irritability which I think would have been relieved had he occasionally permitted it to vent itself in expletives; as it was, it made him querulous at times and peevish. He was

constitutionally delicate, and a misogynist, a trait he very ineffectually tried to conceal. I think it was the pretentiousness of the English lady of that period, with her affectations and sure belief in her own superiority over everybody else, which prejudiced him against the sex. His facial resemblance to Lamb was enhanced by a slight impediment in his speech, in his efforts to conceal which he spoke in a strange sepulchral *sotto-voce* manner, as though he were shivering with cold.

The dear good man, who did not make any attempt to convert me from my somewhat unorthodox religious opinions, had nevertheless one fad which amounted to an obsession, and that was temperance. He subsequently became secretary to the Church of England Temperance Society, a post which he filled with zeal until he got a living in a charming old-world village near Tewkesbury, where he ended his days and revelled in his beautiful Saxon church. In order to impress upon my young and receptive mind the evils of drink, he took me one Saturday night to all the low public-houses in the unsavoury locality of Seven Dials. My view, that compulsory sobriety did not make people virtuous, and that the condition of the poor was not so much the result as the cause of their intemperance, staggered but did not convince him. What astounded me so much about my excellent uncle and most of the people I met, was their naïveté, their ideas did not seem to be co-ordinated. They possessed much learning; they had read widely, but all their stores of knowledge seemed to be stowed away in water-tight compartments, nor did they appear to bring their mental attainments to bear upon the practical problems of life. It almost seemed as though they were afraid to think, so strongly did they distrust theories and generalisations. Yet, when it came to do anything, I was surprised at their ability and efficiency, but it was all so empirical, I thought, so unphilosophical.

To make my meaning plain I will give one practical illus-

tration. In 1879 England was still rejoicing over the statesmanship of its Prime Minister, who brought back "Peace with honour" from the Berlin Conference. We had been within an ace of war with a colossus, whose feet of clay were hidden from our view, we had a vast empire to protect, we had points of contact all over the world, on the Mediterranean, from Gibraltar to the recently acquired Suez Canal, and "British interests" were all-pervading, they had become a proverb on the Continent. We were surrounded by envious potential enemies, all disposing of large forces, entire populations ready to spring to arms at a moment's notice. We had seen foreign countries defeated, in some cases devastated, and yet we talked of disarmament and thought it degrading for free-born Englishmen to be trained to defend their great heritage. We paid our soldiers to fight for us, but did not think that degrading!

Take another question. The Liberals, for political reasons, desired to break down the power of the territorial aristocracy, and in order to do so they virtually ruined the basic industry of every virile country, agriculture.

It took me many years to discover that underneath the obvious inconsequence and want of logic of my fellow countrymen there was nevertheless a hard substratum of sound sense.

London was a disappointment to me; its mean streets were appalling, Regent Street a tawdry row of low stucco-faced houses, the theatres insignificant. Bond Street alone was a delight on account of its quaintness, but there was nothing to strike the eye, nothing imposing as in the other capitals of Europe that I had seen. Of course all this has been vastly changed and London is rapidly becoming a Metropolis worthy of this great empire.

My uncle was anxious that I should see the sights, but I could not enjoy gadding about when my great pre-occupation was to obtain work and to know people. I had come armed with numerous letters of introduction, but at that time of year

most people were out of town. However, he took me round to his brethren of the cloth, and to see a dear old lady who lived at Hampton Wick and must have thought that Russia was a savage and heathen country, for she asked me whether I had heard of and loved Jesus.

I don't know whether the following is a chestnut. A Frenchman was travelling in an English railway-carriage. To him enter a clergyman who was struck by the freshness and bright cheerfulness of his companion, his beaming smile, clear complexion and beady eyes. Feeling his soul drawn towards him, and anxious to pluck a brand from the burning, he leaned over and inquired:

"Do you love Jesus?"

The Frenchman looked up, and, with an emphatic shake of the head answered:

"No!—I do not love your English Chesus, but," blowing a kiss, "Camembert! Ah!"

Although most of the people I had letters to were out of town, two were in London, one was Walter White, the eccentric and amusing secretary of the Royal Society, to whom my father had given me a line, and the other that extraordinary quixotic character, W. R. S. Ralston, who was then the great Russian literary expert and had translated Kriloff's *Fables*, and some of Turgeniev's novels, besides writing a popular history of the ancient rulers of Kiev, etc. Professor Storojenko had written a letter in Russian to him.

"He won't understand a word of it," the Professor said, "but it will flatter him, and you can translate it for him."

Ralston lived close to Keppel Street, in Alfred Place, and it was with some trepidation that I called one morning on this Russian literary expert, who could not read a Russian letter. A grimy witch-like old Scotchwoman answered the door and showed me up to Ralston's rooms. They were on the first floor but very poorly furnished, a threadbare carpet partly

covered the boards. On a side-table I espied a round of Cheddar and a bottle of Worcester sauce. I subsequently ascertained that this served for his principal diet.

A tall, gaunt man, with a general air of Tennyson about him, Ralston received me rather gruffly, eyed Storojenko's letter suspiciously, and exclaimed:

"What a long letter! What a bore! Tell me what it's all about."

We very soon became fast friends, for Ralston had a heart of gold, and nobody could help loving him. He had served in the British Museum but had been dismissed for aiding and abetting a Pole, who had developed revolutionary proclivities. Bond, however, the Principal, bore him no ill will, and had remained his friend, although he had been unable to retain him. Ralston therefore at once suggested my seeing Bond with a line from him, especially as there was no good Russian scholar at the Museum, where one was much needed. Ralston did me many other good turns during my first years in England and I owe it to him that I became a regular contributor to the *Academy* and the *Athenæum*, the two papers in which I made my literary *début*.

He was a great original, and at the time that I am writing about he was in very poor circumstances; so hard-up was he that when his Russian friends sent him books by parcels post, which in those days could not be prepaid but had to be paid for on delivery, he frequently found it extremely inconvenient and had to borrow the money from his landlady. Discussing this unfortunate circumstance with me, Professor Kovalevsky expressed the opinion that it was so stupid of Ralston to be without money. That remark made a great impression, and I then and there resolved that I would never lay myself open to a charge of similar stupidity.

Later Ralston, though by the way that was not his real name (a friend of his told me that his father once did some-

thing dishonourable and Ralston thereupon adopted the name he went by)—later, as I was saying, he came into a fairly substantial sum of money, but did not alter his mode of life. Vizetelly, the publisher, dying shortly afterwards in very straitened circumstances, left his daughter so badly off that she had to get an appointment as a governess. Ralston, who knew the Vizetellys, as he knew everybody, took compassion on her and asked her to be his wife. On being accepted he made his will in her favour and then quixotically committed suicide. Miss Vizetelly, who was a very lively young lady, immediately proceeded to have a good time, took a house at Brighton, drove a trap up and down the King's Road and got through her legacy surprisingly quickly, after which she went out as a governess again. I have often thought what a novel this little episode could make.

Acting on Ralston's advice I called on Mr. Bond, the Principal of the British Museum, and was duly received by that typical early Victorian. He said he would be glad to have me at the Museum and told me there would be a vacancy next Christmas and that I would have to pass an ordinary Civil Service examination.

Very much elated I went off to King's College and arranged to attend a course of Civil Service Examination classes. Meanwhile I presented my letter of introduction to Mr. Walter White at Burlington House, who received me with great geniality.

"You want a billet," he said. "Well, there is one vacant now. The Institution of Civil Engineers want a librarian and have asked me to recommend them somebody. I shall recommend you."

I protested that I knew nothing of engineering, but he would take no denial.

"A dumb priest can't get a parish," he said and gave me a letter to the secretary. This official I discovered was away on holiday, so I did not worry about him, but kept on attending

my King's College classes, the prospect of getting into the British Museum being very alluring. At the same time another uncle, having failed to get me put down for the Foreign Office, obtained for me a nomination for the London and County Bank, as it was then called, but I refused to take this up, preferring the British Museum with its literary glamour.

One day my curate uncle remonstrated with me for not having been to the Institution of Civil Engineers. I protested that it was no use, but he insisted that I ought to present my letter as a matter of courtesy to my father's friend. So, very much against my will, I went to call on Mr. James Forrest, the secretary of the Institution. He was a benevolent-looking old gentleman with a bird's-eye tie and a face as red as a turkey-cock's, he looked exactly as though he had walked out of one of Dickens's novels. Mr. Forrest literally jumped at me.

"I don't know whether we can offer you enough to satisfy a man of your attainments, but I was a young fellow here myself, and you might rise to my position."

"But I know nothing about engineering," I explained.

"Oh! never mind, you'll soon pick that up. When could you join?"

I told him how I was placed with regard to the British Museum, and he very considerately consented to my calling on Bond and ascertaining what my chances in that direction were, and then letting him know the result. I immediately trotted away to the British Museum where I was received by Mr. Bond's private secretary, Mr. Bond being unable to see me. The private secretary explained that after all there would be no vacancy, as the authorities intended to fill it from another department. My feelings may be imagined! If I had not accidentally called on Mr. Forrest I might have continued preparing myself at King's College for a non-existing vacancy, and I would have wasted my time and found myself without a billet. This is how it happened that I became the

librarian of the Institution of Civil Engineers in Great George Street, Westminster, within sound of Big Ben, and a very pleasant five years I spent there, in spite of Mr. James Forrest, who turned out to be more splenetic than benevolent, although not really a bad sort.

The library, which in those days consisted of barely 25,000 volumes, was situated on the first floor of No. 25 on the north side of the street, long since pulled down to make room for the housing of our ever-growing bureaucracy. It was the room in which Lord Byron's body had lain in quasi-state on its arrival from Missolonghi. The thoroughfare on which its windows looked out—next to one of which I sat—was largely frequented by the men who were making history, especially members of both Houses of Parliament. Gladstone, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, Lord Derby, the Marquis of Hartington, Lord Elcho, John Bright, to mention only a few, constantly passed by on their way to their respective talking-shops. Sir William Vernon Harcourt, who in spite of his Plantagenet blood, had the largest feet I ever beheld—all studded with bunions—had a never-to-be-forgotten pompous and self-assertive walk; he looked as he processed along, with his erect and portly figure and massive head, like some nineteenth-century Roman Emperor treading heavily on the prostrate bodies of the victims of his lust of conquest. Of him it is related that one day as he was thus conducting his solitary triumphant progress through Great George Street, a meek and inoffensive-looking individual diffidently approached him, and asked him the price of a house he was passing. Harcourt replied that he did not know it, without arresting his procession; the stranger followed him, pointed to another house, and asked the price of that, with the same result. This questioning at last offended the dignity of Sir William, and he angrily turned on his persistent interlocutor and indignantly exclaimed:

"I am not a house-agent!"

"No, sir, I never supposed you were; I thought, however, that you had just bought the street."

In later years I had for a friend and neighbour, Mr. Robert Sidney Mitford, Commissioner of Prisons, one of the sunniest and most delightful companions I have ever known, who had been private secretary to Sir William Harcourt at the Home Office, and was full of stories of his former chief's unfailing kindliness and pungent wit. Sir William had one very inconvenient habit which would certainly have distressed any less resourceful and wealthy woman than his wife, and that was his custom of bringing home to dinner, unexpectedly and without warning, collections of men from the House.

While I was at the Institution, there appeared in *The Times* a report of a speech of Sir William Harcourt in which was interpolated a very stupid obscene remark. The copies were immediately withdrawn from circulation as soon as the disgusting trick was discovered. It appears that this was inserted at the last moment by a printer under notice to quit, who profited by an opportunity to take this mean revenge. A few days later there appeared in the agony column of *The Times* the following advertisement which I saw myself:

"Lady H—— expresses her regret that Sir W—— H—— should have ventured to discuss a subject on which he is so little competent to speak."

Mr. Gladstone was a very different figure from Sir William Harcourt. His step was elastic and, although he always looked dignified and every inch a gentleman, he had something indefinable in his appearance which always reminded me of the laughable French caricatures of Englishmen. One day I was walking behind him in St. James's Park, when his shoe-laces came undone, he stopped, and, putting his foot on a chair, tied them up again with the agility of a young man.

There was only one other man who had quite that typically English look that was always rather amusing to my continental-

trained eyes, and that was Professor Lecky. But while Gladstone only reminded me of a caricature, Lecky looked like a caricature come to life. Once I encountered him unawares in Richmond Park, he was in his usual early Victorian garments, a bird's-eye tie, a formidable silk hat, a mournfully respectable frock-coat hanging loose from his sloping shoulders. He was walking with his usual lady-like mincing steps, his arms held rigidly down, but his right hand turned up, gently twirling an umbrella. The Arcadian air and the sylvan glades of Richmond Park had evidently produced an effect, and he was letting himself go. It was rather a pathetic sight and reminded me of an elderly governess trying to be frisky.

Another interesting figure in Westminster was Ashmead-Bartlett, whose brother later married the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. His eye-glass was a great feature. A friend of mine witnessed the following incident in the House, when Sir Ashmead to his astonishment saw the austere John Bright laughing immoderately at something he was being told.

"What are you laughing at?" he inquired.

"We were laughing at you," said John Bright.

"Laughing at me?" Ashmead-Bartlett asked fiercely, "what do you see to laugh at in me?"

Now John Bright had just been told a story about Sir Henry Havelock, and on the spur of the moment related it to Ashmead-Bartlett, making him the hero instead of the gallant general. Sir Henry Havelock, as everybody knows, took himself very seriously, soldiers used to say that when he came amongst them "it felt like Sunday." Walking along the street one day "somewhere in India" a drunken soldier ran up against him; on being rebuked, the soldier murmured "b——y fool!"

"Do you know who I am?" Sir Henry sternly demanded.

"Yesh! I know. You're a b——y fool!"

"You must be drunk, fellow, not to know that I am General Sir Henry Havelock!"

"Yesh! I'm drunk, I know, I'll get over that! But you are a b——y fool. You'll never get over that!"

At No. 26, next door, lived Sir Joseph Whitworth, who was of course a distinguished member of the Institution, but already in a morose old age. His young and good-looking wife had what our American cousins expressively call rather a thin time. Opposite were the offices of Sir Frederick La Trobe Bateman, a fine courtly Elizabethan figure, and on our right was the great Tommy Hawkesley. Sir John Hawkshaw was a few doors off, and dear old Sir Charles Hutton Gregory, who so chivalrously protected that delightful actress, Mrs. Stirling, against a drunken husband, was close by. Sir Benjamin Baker, who built the Forth Bridge (he borrowed the cantilever design from an American publication in the library) was near Queen Anne's Gate, and Sir Frederick Bramwell was at the corner of our street. There were many others: polished Sir W. H. Barlow, who rebuilt the Tay Bridge; Sir James Brunless, Sir George Barclay Bruce, the great railway engineers; Sir John Coode, famed for his harbour-works; Sir Robert Rawlinson, who was the sanitary commissioner towards the end of the Crimean War, who drained Windsor Castle, and was the chief engineer of the Local Government Board; Sir William Anderson, of Easton and Anderson's, who became director of Woolwich and had been trained at the Oboukhoff Works near St. Petersburg and spoke Russian like a native; and many, many others.

All these were real men dealing with concrete facts, empire-builders, but intensely practical and, to my surprise, mostly conservative and, more often than not, free from any political bias, content to work, and to leave general ideas to others. And they did work, they took no holidays, they never played golf. They worked Saturdays and Sundays, and all day, and often all night. They were of the Gradgrind school hated by the hedonist genius of Dickens, but for all that they were cheery, and they were giants. The empire owes them much.

Among all these distinguished men Sir Frederick Bramwell was the outstanding figure, both in size and intellect and for ready wit. He was consulting engineer to a great variety of undertakings, small and great. The Isle of Wight railway was one of these, and as his duties in connection with this enterprise were not onerous his remuneration was proportionately small. Great was the surprise of the management when he suddenly increased his charges. They wrote to him to remonstrate and to point out that the work had not been augmented and that therefore nothing had happened to justify his larger demands. To this Sir Frederick replied:

DEAR SIRS,

You may have noticed that I have added the letters F.R.S. to my name. This means Fees Raised Since.

Yours faithfully.

FREDERICK BRAMWELL.

A quaint but very able engineer, F. C. May, who was a man of great age, was a constant visitor at Sir Frederick Bramwell's office. He had an unfortunate infirmity which caused him to shake his head continually. While he was one day waiting to see Sir Frederick, some of the young men in the office thought to raise a laugh at poor Mr. May's expense, and one of them asked him:

"Mr. May, why does your head always wag like that?"

"For the same reason, young gentleman, that your tongue wags, sir, from excessive weakness."

The staff of the Institution was quite as Dickensy as the members. The chief clerk in the entrance-hall was a retired sergeant in the army who had not an "h" to bless himself with. His wife, who was also the housekeeper, was a middle-aged lady of opulent charms who carried on an intrigue with one of the porters. Her husband, who was a very jealous man, was sublimely ignorant of this, and I only discovered it by accident through going into an attic to arrange some books,

when I heard whispering in an adjoining room and presently caught sight of the guilty pair slipping away, unobserved as they thought. Of course I kept my own counsel, but on frequent occasions I noticed similar suspicious manœuvres.

The senior porter was a dear, a venerable old sinner, Beck by name, who was always getting into scrapes and always ingeniously getting out of them again. In his early days he had been a gentlemen's gentleman, and many were the amusing stories he had to tell of his past life. He had been valet to numerous celebrities including Prince Louis Napoleon (afterwards Napoleon III.) and the Duke of Teck, both very often in desperate financial straits. The Duke of Teck went by the sobriquet of the "Duke on Tick."

"One day," Beck told me, "the Duke sent for me and said to me 'Beck,' he said, 'the Princess Mary of Cambridge and I have decided to put our incomes together and get married.' Now, sir," Beck continued, "the Princess Mary had £5000 a year and the Duke of Teck no more than £150."

As the autumn advanced I proceeded to deliver my various letters of introduction. My father had given me letters to two very distinguished men. One was Sir Harry Verney, who became the father of the House and lived to the age of ninety-seven in the full possession of his faculties. He was then about eighty-seven and a vigorous, though very spare, active man. He had fought at the Battle of Waterloo as a Calvert, before he changed his name, and had ridden across the Andes. A quiet, modest, unassuming man, he received me with the ancient courtesy of a by-gone age and made me feel that I had somehow dropped into the eighteenth century, for his house was as antiquated as he. Very much interested in Russia, he made me talk to him about that country, and more particularly in what esteem England was held there. By way of parenthesis he stated, quite as a matter of course, that he had known the Emperor Nicholas I. who had died a few years before I was

born. I had somewhat strong views about Lord Beaconsfield's policy in the East and the undesirability of arousing the hostility of the Russians who *au fond* were well-disposed towards us. As we know now, this was really playing Germany's game. He listened to me very attentively, but dismissed my presumptuous criticisms of Lord Beaconsfield with the remark:

"Well, of course, he is not of my party."

That seemed to settle Lord Beaconsfield.

The other distinguished man I had a letter to was Sir William Robert Grove, no longer a man of science but just an ordinary judge. A very fine old boy, with a robust manner and rough exterior which was assumed to hide a very kindly disposition. He lived in that thoroughfare of which it has been said, there is an end to all things, even to Harley Street. Since that remark was first made I think the Cromwell Road, which had not then been built, has acquired a better title to the saying. When I told Sir William Grove, after he had expatiated on the difficulty of finding employment in London for young men, that I had already got a billet, he was evidently much relieved and exclaimed:

"Ah! then with you it is a case of *veni vidi vici*!"

Professor Kovalevsky had given me a letter to Ashton Dilke. Before leaving Russia I had had a consultation with Professors Storojenko and Kovalevsky as to whom I should be accredited to. Storojenko wanted Kovalevsky to give me a line to Mr. Frederic Harrison, but Kovalesky would not hear of this.

"No," he said, "Harrison will receive him gloomily and ask him whether he subscribes to the articles of Auguste Comte, and if he tells him he doesn't he will have no further use for him. No, much better let me give him a letter to Ashton Dilke."

"Poor Ashton Dilke!" said Storojenko, "whom the Siberian merchants nearly killed with their hospitality! He had to go home and get married to save his life!"

But Kovalevsky insisted. He then told us that when he

was in London in the winter he was extremely fond of roast chestnuts, which he used to buy in the streets and devour as he pursued his way. Unfortunately the last time he was doing this he espied Dilke in the distance walking towards him. He felt like a naughty schoolboy who had been caught doing something he shouldn't, and incontinently bolted and concealed himself in a shop until Dilke had passed.

The introduction to the Dilkes proved a great boon, and was the means of showing me a side of London society which I should not have otherwise seen. Mrs. Ashton Dilke, without being strictly speaking beautiful, was a woman of great charm, and, like all her sisters, a brilliant, if perhaps somewhat superficial, talker. One of her sisters was married to Charles Harrison, a robust and prosperous stockbroker, brother to Frederic of that ilk, another was a very beautiful girl then recently married to a young doctor of the name of Priestley, but the third of the family was the famous Mrs. Crawford, who brought about the downfall of Sir Charles Dilke.

The Dilkes showed me great kindness, and I used to go and play billiards with them on Sunday afternoons. The first interesting dinner party I went to was at their house. It was a small gathering. Professor Minto,[1] the editor of the *Daily News*, was there, Mr. Warre, brother of the Provost of Eton and private secretary to Sir Richard, afterwards Lord Cross, one of Professor Huxley's sons and his daughters, the Harrisons and some other people whom I do not remember. Warre did most of the talking. When he arrived he told Dilke he had been to the Colnaghi Gallery to see some etchings, to which Dilke replied that Colnaghi's was very expensive. Somebody sententiously observed that all beautiful things were expensive, whereupon Warre turning to Dilke said: "Is Mrs. Dilke

[1] Professor Minto was the author of the article on Prince Metternich in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* which concluded with the following oracular sentence: "He was an affectionate if not a faithful husband." This may be interpreted to suit the taste of the reader.

expensive?" Everybody laughed, Mrs. Ashton Dilke looked quite pleased. In Moscow, I thought, such a remark would have been regarded as in very bad taste.

At dinner the prospects of the general election were discussed, and I was surprised to hear Warre say that he thought a Conservative Government would come in again because we had got all the reforms we wanted, and there was nothing the Liberals could tempt the country with. This was in 1879! Of course he was woefully mistaken. He also took occasion to say that the French people were so much more civilised than the English.

Professor Minto said something about Parnell and the Home Rule Party, and what trouble they gave in the House. I could not help expressing my failure to understand why we did not give the Irish Home Rule and let them stew in their own juice. Ashton Dilke looked at me severely through forbidding spectacles, and rebuked me.

"You wait till you have lived a little longer in England and you will understand why we can't give Ireland Home Rule," he said in crushing tones.

I lived in England long enough to see his party espouse Home Rule.

Mr. and Mrs. Harrison had just come back from Constantinople. On their return they met another couple who had also visited Turkey and boasted of having seen everything and everybody.

"Did you see the Dardanelles?" Mrs. Harrison asked.

"The Dardanelles? Let me think," the other lady replied. "Oh, no!" she said decidedly, after a little reflection. "Sorry we missed them, but they had gone home on leave."

Mrs. Harrison asked a couple of conundrums. One was:

"Why is Mr. Gladstone like a hundred-guinea piano?"

Answer: "Because he is not upright, but he is grand."

The other was: "What should you do to make a Conservative of Gladstone?"

Answer: "Turn him round and round till he is Dizzy."

One met all sorts of delightful people at the Ashton Dilkes. On one occasion I found Sir Lyon Playfair, afterwards Lord Playfair, already a very old man then, *en tête à tête* with Mrs. Ashton Dilke. Before leaving he told us two weird stories, both referring to the 1851 Exhibition with which he had had so much to do.

"I must tell you," he said, "that when the Exhibition was completed, a discovery was made which almost amounted to a tragedy, and very nearly shattered the whole project. As you know, the glass palace was erected in Hyde Park, but as Parliament, which did not favour the idea at all, would allow none of the trees to be cut down, the crystal structure had to be erected round and over them. When the building was finished it was discovered that the trees harboured a number of sparrows, and nothing could be done to dislodge them. It was felt that if the sparrows were allowed to remain they would foul the exhibits; exhibitors would not run that risk, and the whole thing would be a failure. Everybody was most concerned, the news had to be broken to the Prince Consort, who was in despair. In great distress, he told the Queen, and expressed his fear that the dream of his life might thus never become a reality. But the brave Queen was undismayed. With splendid courage she immediately sent for the Duke of Wellington. Now the Iron Duke was already very infirm with one foot in the grave, but, with that noble sense of duty which always distinguished him, he instantly obeyed the summons and was told the dreadful news. Without a moment's hesitation the ever resourceful soldier at once replied: 'Why not try sparrow-hawks?' It was a simple remedy, but nobody had thought of it. In an ecstasy of gratitude the Queen threw her arms round the F.M.'s neck, kissed him, and cried: 'The dear old Duke! He has saved us again!'"

The other story had none of the charm of the first. It was

about that famous American journalist, Horace Greeley. When the Great Exhibition was ready to be opened the exhibits were divided into groups, and every group was presided over by the representative of a different nationality. After much trouble they had all got sorted out and arranged, when, at the last moment, it was found that the building trades group had no president. All the countries had been used up except the United States which was virtually unrepresented except for Horace Greeley. So the great American journalist was made president of the building materials group. The American press even at that early date was already distinguished for its enterprise, and as soon as it was known on the other side of the Atlantic that Horace Greeley had been made President of the Building Materials Group of the Great Exhibition, he was inundated with requests for articles on the building materials of London. Now Horace Greeley was a brilliant journalist, but he knew nothing about building materials, still he was an undefeatable American and was not to be put in a quandary by a little matter of that kind. He wrote a splendid article on the building materials of London which was "syndicated" all over the United States, and in which he said that the favourite building material in London architecture was "yellow marble" which gave the capital of the United Kingdom its magnificent air, but that the finest building in the whole of London was St. George's Hospital which was "constructed entirely of yellow marble!"

Another interesting man I met at the Dilkes' was Clemenceau. He was over with a commission appointed by the French government to inquire into the condition of the British working-classes, and was brought to call by that fierce fire-eater and intrepid sailor, Admiral Maxse. Clemenceau, of course, spoke English perfectly, and was some forty years younger than he was when he went to "propagand" in America. He was nevertheless pleased at an opportunity of talking French.

On my asking him how the English working-class position compared with that in France, he said that he found the state of things over here very different from what it was on his side of the Channel.

"Your working men are so much more sensible and reasonable than they are with us. *Chez nous,*" he added, "*chacun veut améliorer le sort du genre humain en quarante-huit heures! Eh! bien! le problème ainsi posé est très difficile à résoudre!*"

As everybody knows, the *Athenæum* was the property of Sir Charles Dilke, and the editor, Norman McColl, was a frequent visitor at the Ashton Dilkes'. He was a typical Scot, sandy-haired, with a profuse and untidy sandy beard, and a rugged gnarled face, of the colour of yellow parchment, illumined by humorous, sparkling eyes, which, though brown, had also a yellowish gleam. In his dress he strove to resemble the typical, respectable French bourgeois professor. It was impossible to imagine him going out without an umbrella, a silk hat and a frock-coat. He was a great cynic, tall and portly with the gentle voice of a child. Talking to him one day about a work of Tolstoy's I expressed a desire to translate it, my friend Aylmer Maude having not yet performed this service to the British public. McColl smiled in his quaint oracular way and said: "You will have your virtue for your reward."

One day as he was taking leave of Mrs. Ashton Dilke, while I was calling, she said to him:

"You have not told me a story. Every time you call you tell me a new story. I insist on your telling me one now."

Without a moment's hesitation he replied:

"Well, Robert Browning has just told me one about Mme. Mohl. You know there is a cholera epidemic in Paris. Before leaving, Browning, as is his wont, went to pay his respects to Mme. Mohl, and found the venerable old lady with her feet in a tub of steaming hot water, a thick shawl round her shoulders, a woollen cap on her head and a glass of some sort of

warm drink on a table by her side. Browning was concerned and expressed the hope that she had not contracted the epidemic.

"*Non,*" she answered: "*mais je prends mes petites précautions.*"

Joseph Chamberlain was another visitor at the Dilkes. He was then a thin querky, untidy-looking man, with a turned-down collar which gave him very much the appearance of a precocious Eton boy.

Colonel Ernest Villiers, who had been private secretary to the eccentric Lord Dudley, once told me a story of a trick that was played on Chamberlain in Paris. Chamberlain was staying at the Embassy, and one day at a big dinner given in his honour he was brought a huge parcel purporting to be an important despatch. He asked permission to open it when out fell a jacket bearing a label on which was written in large letters: "*On ne laisse pas ses habits chez une dame quand on s'appelle Joseph.*"

Joseph Chamberlain's first Cabinet appointment under the 1880 Gladstone administration was that of President of the Board of Trade. He had not been in office very long when his private secretary, a most correct and tactful young man, mysteriously handed him a letter, and apologised for having opened it, adding:

"Of course I did not read it when I saw the address."

It was dated from Lupus Street, Pimlico, a neighbourhood with an unsavoury reputation in those days, and signed Jesse Collings.

When Sir Charles Dilke was made Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Ashton Dilke told me that "Charlie" was to be given a free hand in Egypt and the Near East without any interference from old "Granny," as Lord Granville was called, for which indiscretion her husband severely reproved her.

Sir Charles Dilke was a high-handed and extraordinarily tactless man. It is much to be regretted that he never went to a public school, where he might have learned self-restraint, for

he had undoubtedly great ability, but he often did and said dreadful things. I remember going to a meeting held at the Lyceum Theatre to do honour to Sarah Bernhardt. Sir Charles Dilke was in the chair and opened the proceedings with an elaborate and painfully carefully prepared speech in somewhat indifferent French. After a short time he broke down and burst into English. He said what a wonderful actress Sarah Bernhardt was, and how wide was her scope, she had even played the part of Hamlet. With her great versatility only one thing remained for her to do, and that was to play the part of Falstaff. An explosion of laughter greeted this unexpected sally, for the divine Sarah had, from being a human skeleton, recently been putting on a good deal of flesh; and then, as though ashamed of themselves, the audience became solemnly silent, it was as though a thrill of horror had passed through the theatre.

Sir Charles Dilke's high-handedness manifested itself at once on the death of his father, who had by will left Hepworth Dixon perpetual editor of the *Athenæum*. When Hepworth Dixon returned from his autumn holiday he was surprised to find somebody sitting in his editorial chair at the *Athenæum* office, and politely asked him to vacate it, but the other man, who was McColl, as politely told him that he had been appointed to the editorship. Hepworth Dixon was furious, but McColl would not give way. An appeal to Dilke only brought the answer that if Hepworth Dixon thought he had a legal claim against him it was open to him to go to law about it. Hepworth Dixon had a wholesome dread of the law, and no money to waste, so he "took it lying down."

When Sir Charles's first wife died he had her body cremated and the ashes placed in an urn on the dining-room mantelpiece in Sloane Street where he was supposed to weep over them. Captain Ruxton, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Cambridge, told me that one day the housemaid by mistake upset the ashes out of the urn and filled it up again out of the grate.

Though how Captain Ruxton came to know this interesting domestic detail I could not get him to explain.

Before concluding this chapter I must hark back and say a few words about the life and movement in the streets when I first came to London. There was an alertness and cheerfulness about the people, a picturesqueness about their dress (the costers wore rows of pearl buttons down their trousers), and about the vehicles which seem to have departed. To my eyes the men of the people have grown much more sloppy in appearance and they also seem less intelligent. There is an all-pervading air of dulness in the streets to-day. The soldiers for instance, especially the cavalry, looked much smarter in their funny little caps stuck on one side of the head and secured by a chin-strap, swaggering along with their dapper little canes. And then the bus drivers and the bus conductors, with their constant flow of sarcasm and repartee! I remember seeing a conductor at the Mansion House trying to entice passengers. He was shouting: "Olborn, Igh Olborn, Hoxford Street, Marble Arch, Hoxford Street," when his eyes suddenly 'lighted on a young lady, and placing his hand on his heart, he beamed on her with a gallant and fascinating smile, and called out: "Yde Park." Of course the lady instantly succumbed to his blandishments and disappeared in the bus.

At that time the phrase most in vogue was "there you are, don't you know," and its origin was thus explained to me. An old gentleman was sitting next to the driver on a London bus when he asked him: "Do you like driving an omnibus? Wouldn't you rather be a tram driver?" Those were the days of horse trams. The driver was indignant and shook his head as he voiced an emphatic: "Tram driver? Ugh! No!"

"But why not?" the old gentleman persisted. "It is surely much easier."

The driver could scarcely control himself for rage, but at last he blurted out: "Why look 'ere, sir, it's like this 'ere. If

you're a tram driver and gets drove into, why where are you? But if you are a bus driver and you gets drove into," holding up his reins, "why, there you are, don't cher know!"

The bus drivers have gone, and the Rothschild family cannot therefore present them any more with their pretty-coloured favours and pheasants, as they used to do, and the bus horses have gone and with them much of the sportsmanship of the streets. We are getting too civilised now-a-days, and we never have occasion to put up our "dukes."

CHAPTER VII

SETTLED IN LONDON

In 1881 my father left Russia and came to live in London. This brought about a great change for me as I abandoned my rooms—in those days everybody lived in rooms as there were no private hotels and boarding-houses were uncomfortable—and took up my abode with him. I had by that time made plenty of friends and went out nearly every evening. My father renewed his acquaintance with the companions of his youth and we presently had a very pleasant circle. Among these were John Ruskin, an interesting figure, who reminded me forcibly of Count Leo Tolstoy, and Admiral Sir Reginald Macdonald, the Clanranald, who had as a small boy been a playmate of Princess Victoria, as she was then, and was famous for having on one occasion so far forgotten himself as to box her ears! Another Highland chieftain whom we knew was the archæologist, Henry Syer Cuming. He claimed to be a "cousin" of the Queen's and of King Victor Emmanuel. One day, as he was explaining his relationship to me, and I was resignedly listening and politely smiling, I am afraid an expression of incredulity must have crept into my smile, for he thundered out at me: "I am not joking, sir!" On another occasion when he was descanting on the beauties of the bagpipes, I innocently remarked that nothing gave me a greater thrill than to hear the pipers of the Scots Guards, playing "The Campbells are coming," whereupon he looked at me impressively and said, his voice trembling with rage:

"If anybody were to play that tune on my entering a room, I should take it as a personal insult, sir!"

It seems that there is a feud of some four or five hundred

years' standing between the two clans, but, of course, I was entirely ignorant of this unfortunate difference.

Ruskin was a pessimist, he thought England was going to the dogs, and used to say so most eloquently in a charming silvery voice; to hear him talk was like listening to the reading aloud of one of his books. I once ventured to cheer him. I said that as we sit by the seashore watching the tide come in, it often seemed as though the sea were receding instead of advancing, and that, as a matter of fact, every ninth wave really did recede. Was it not possible, I asked, that we were to-day witnessing this ninth wave in the advancing tide of English history?

He looked at me mournfully with those expressive steel-blue eyes of his and admitted that there was a great deal of hopefulness in what I said.

In one of his books, *The Pleasures of England*, Ruskin specially mentions his indebtedness to my father.

We got to know him through a large family of boisterous and rather affected girls who, when they were together, used intermittently to burst out in loud shrieks of discordant and obviously forced laughter. The mother of these girls complained to me of Ruskin's misanthropical tendencies.

"I don't think," she said, "that man can have any really nice feelings. Fancy, he told me that my daughters made him feel miserable. I asked him why, and he said, 'because they were so happy!'"

Ruskin had certainly laid himself open to misinterpretation by his extreme politeness.

A very charming thing about Ruskin was his way of dressing. He always wore what closely resembled a stock, and his coat collar was cut in a peculiar fashion, like those on portraits of the period of George IV. Although very nervous and consequently extremely irritable, he had a delightful old-world courtesy which seemed to pervade him like an atmosphere.

He loved dining with us because we understood his tastes and always gave him birds. He pretended he did not care what he ate and rather reminded me of the young guardsman's famous dictum: "Give me a bird and a bottle of burgundy and I can rough it with anybody."

Admiral Sir Reginald I. Macdonald, usually called "Rim" by King Edward and his intimates, was a very different type of man. There was nothing Rim had not done, there was nobody whom Rim did not know and could not tell stories about. He was the delight of Marlborough House, and often, when the whole company shook with laughter, Queen Alexandra, who was very deaf even then, would shake her warning finger at him and exclaim:

"Ah! Sir Rim! Have you been telling some of your naughty stories again?"

But Rim was a licensed libertine wherever he went. Nobody took him seriously, and everybody liked him.

Talking of Queen Alexandra reminds me of Herbert Johnson, the artist, who accompanied the then Prince of Wales on his first trip to India in the capacity of artist to one of the illustrated papers. Among other things a tiger shoot was arranged for the Prince, and he commissioned Johnson to paint his portrait while mounted on his elephant going tiger-shooting. Johnson made the necessary sketches, and when he got home he proceeded to paint the picture for which the Prince of Wales gave him several sittings. On its completion the Prince brought the Princess to the studio to see it. The Princess gazed at it intently for some time and then turned to the Prince and said with her slightly foreign accent:

"Very fine picture. But where is de tiger? You look very fine, big man, but dere is no tiger. You said to me you shot a tiger. But where is de tiger?"

In a stage aside which the Princess could not hear, the Prince told Johnson:

"Hang it all! Johnson, we must have a tiger!"

That is how it came about that the now famous picture, showing the Prince tiger-shooting, represented a tiger jumping up the elephant's back while the Prince is depicted in the act of shooting it.

To return to the obscure and humble author. I was still working hard at the Institution of Civil Engineers, my hours were from 9.30 to 5.30, with only half an hour for lunch, and no Saturday half-holidays. On Tuesday and Friday evenings, and sometimes on Thursday evenings, I had to be back at my post at 7.30, remaining till 9 and sometimes later. I assisted the secretary, Mr. Forrest, in conducting the meetings. Many a young fellow did I secure a first chance of speaking, and of thus bringing himself forward, and under the notice of the then all-powerful Great George Street clique. I compiled a subject-index of the *Minutes of Proceedings*, and made abstracts of articles in foreign engineering publications, wrote obituary notices, etc., etc., all in addition to my regular work as librarian. For this I received the munificent salary of £100 a year, which by the time I had put in five years' service had risen to £120. Mr. Forrest was a remarkably efficient secretary, he lived for the Institution, had a wonderful memory and was a great martinet. I am sure that the training I received under him was of inestimable service to me in after life, for he taught me how to find out and do things for myself. He had no control over his temper, and his language was occasionally too explosive for others than engineers, a deserving body of professional men who have to spend their lives in blasting and damming, but he was also very encouraging and appreciative of good work. During my term of service under him many interesting events happened. We had an address from old Ferdinand de Lesseps, who was eighty-five, and in the full vigour of manhood, and had come over to make propaganda for the project which is popularly supposed to have killed him, the Panama Canal. A fine tall figure, with a big white mous-

tache, and a certain martial courtesy, he looked more like a general or field-marshal than a *savant*. Then we had a wonderful paper by Eiffel, the constructor of the Eiffel Tower, whose system of steel girder building has been universally adopted. No less striking was Professor Tyndall, with his snow-white hair, bronzed complexion and supple and youthful figure.

Dr. Carl W. (afterwards Sir William) Siemens gave us a series of lectures on the application of electricity "to the use and convenience of man," and in order to illustrate one of these he obtained from the United Service Institution in Whitehall a loan of some models. The day after the lecture one of our messengers was sent over to take these models back. Now it so happened that some foolish conspirator had, on the previous day, deposited against the Home Office building an infernal machine which exploded and caused some damage, but scarcely enough to justify the risk and trouble. It had, however, put the police very much on the *qui vive*, and when our messenger came sauntering past the Home Office, a policeman stopped him and asked him what it was he was carrying. The messenger, parrot-like, replied: "Dynamo," not having the faintest idea what a dynamo was.

"Oh! Dynamite!" said the policeman, "come along, my man," and with unexampled heroism he took our messenger and the supposed "dynamite" to the police station in King Street, which had not as yet been pulled down. Major Majendie, the Chief Inspector of Explosives, was immediately sent for from the Home Office, and he, of course, instantly set the matter right, but the messenger, who had to account for his prolonged absence, had some difficulty in convincing Mr. Forrest that his explanation was not a yarn.

Mr. Forrest's irascibility and impatience often led to strange mistakes. I had hardly been a week at the Institution and was absolutely entirely ignorant of a great many things, which, had I been educated in England, I should doubtless have known,

when Mr. Forrest one day told me to go to the Local Government Board and ask Sir Robert Rawlinson for a copy of a Report on an outbreak of typhoid somewhere. I did not quite catch the name of the place, so I repeated what I had understood, and asked whether that was right. Fuming and swelling with fury he cried out:

"Now don't argue about it. Go and get it."

Fortunately Sir Robert Rawlinson was out when I called. In his stead I saw his very agreeable assistant, Mr. Stephen Harding Terry, a man of great culture, who became my life-long friend. When I told him I wanted a copy of the Local Government Board Report on an Outbreak of Typhoid Fever on a Catamaran, his face was a study. He was much too courteous to laugh. He asked me to wait while he went to make inquiries, and presently he returned with a pamphlet in his hand.

"I think" he said, "this must be what Mr. Forrest means."

It was a report of an outbreak of this epidemic at Caterham, the famous Baldwin Latham report, which proved that the typhoid bacillus could make its way through chalk. Later, at Maidstone, it was even asserted that the typhoid germ could penetrate a water-main.

Terry was a tall, handsome man, the son of a country parson, and with the courtly manners of the parsonage. We struck up a close friendship after this incident, for he had a good deal of sympathy with me, inasmuch as that his own chief, Sir Robert Rawlinson, a self-made man, was quite as difficult as Forrest, though perhaps in a somewhat different way. Many are the pleasant evenings I have spent in his rooms, swapping stories. He had a large circle of friends among the young and rising engineers.

One of these, who became the senior partner in Easton & Anderson's, Frank Stuart Courtenay, had a dry, perky way of telling a story. Of these only one has impressed itself upon my memory.

Courtenay had gone to Edinburgh on an engineering job in

connection with the waterworks, I think, and had met with an accident, which necessitated his wearing his arm in a sling. While at Edinburgh a friend of his came to stay with him at his lodgings, where Courtenay occupied the dining-room floor and secured a bedroom for his friend at the top of the house. On the first night of his arrival the friend was taken out by Courtenay, and, not being accustomed to the Scottish way of taking whisky, got very drunk. With much difficulty, his arm being in a sling, Courtenay steered him home, where they found a genial fire burning in the dining-room fire-place, at sight of which his friend exclaimed:

"What a (hiccough) bootiful fire! Remindsh me of the sun: Do you know anything of ashtronomy?"

And without further ado he squatted down on the hearth-rug and proceeded to deliver himself of a most learned and incoherent discourse on astronomy. In the middle of it he pulled himself up, and said:

"Well, I don't know what you are going to do, but I'm going to bed."

Courtenay, though he had the use of only one arm, piloted his friend upstairs and put him to bed. Then he went down and after undressing himself with great difficulty, lay down to rest, and began congratulating himself that he was at last rid of his friend for the night, when he heard a most unearthly noise, as if something heavy was rolling down the stairs. The noise grew louder and louder until it ended with a big bang outside his room. There, on the door-mat, in a helpless mass, lay his friend. Courtenay now lost his temper, and went for him in strong language.

"Sho shorry," his friend replied, "remembered you had your arm in a shling. Thought I would come down and help you to undresh!"

Edgar Philip Rathbone was also a friend of Terry's. He was great on his father, a Liverpool merchant, who suffered from

unaccountable lapses of memory. He had been known to pour port over salt spilt on the table-cloth, and when dining out at the house of a widow-lady, he remained after all the other guests had departed. At last the hostess with the courage of despair, bid him good-bye.

"Good-bye," said Rathbone, "must you be going? Sorry we had such a bad dinner, but as a matter of fact our cook got drunk."

Edgar P. Rathbone had chambers off Jermyn Street, and was very much disturbed one morning on being told that a lady had called to see him. He got into his clothes as quickly as he could, and rushed down to the hall to find his mother's maid in great distress. His father and mother had come up to town for a few weeks, and had taken a furnished house in the Cromwell Road. On the previous evening old Mr. Rathbone had gone to a City dinner, and had not come home. His wife was in the greatest anxiety as to what had become of him, and had sent her maid to her son to ask him to help her to find his father.

"Oh! Is that all?" said young Rathbone. "Go home to your mistress and tell her not to worry. I think I shall find him all right."

He then jumped into a hansom and drove to the Euston Hotel, and asked whether his father was staying there. Sure enough he had spent the night there and was still in bed.

"Ah! my dear boy!" cried old Rathbone, when his son was ushered into the room: "So glad you have come at last. I was afraid I should have had to stay in bed all day. You see, I have forgotten where we live, so I came here where they know me. Will you send home for some clothes? I don't want to be seen about in evening dress in the morning!"

As I have already said, Forrest was a great martinet. Never shall I forget his face one morning as I met him on the platform of South Kensington station at 9.30, the time at which I was supposed to be at the Institution in Westminster.

"Hullo! young fellow!" he said, his face purple with rage. "You're very late this morning."

I had no excuse ready, and in my confusion replied:

"Yes, sir, I am afraid we are both rather late this morning!"

I thought he would have exploded, but fortunately the train happened to come in at that moment. I jumped into a third-class compartment nearest the engine, while he travelled first. On arrival at Westminster I sprinted as fast as I could to the Institution, and was there well before him. He never referred to the incident.

At that time, as I have already stated, I had made many friends, and, largely I suppose on account of my polyglot training, I had drifted into the society of the young diplomatists of the minor legations, more particularly the Belgian and Portuguese. The Marquis de Soveral had then just arrived as *attaché* to the Portuguese Legation, the ladies of which used to call him *notre attaché unique*. For my part, I thought his name singularly appropriate for a diplomatist, "sovral," being the Russian for, "I have told a lie."

He had been sent over from Italy, where he had conducted an intrigue with a lady of exalted rank, for which reason the English court had been requested to snub him, because he was supposed to consider himself irresistible. In Portuguese the word "soveral" means "blue eagle," so he was given the sobriquet of Blue Monkey. The first reception he attended was at the Italian Embassy. The Princess of Wales was present and, being determined to take the conceit out of the young man, said to Menabrea, the Italian Ambassador:

"*Montrez-moi donc votre oiseau bleu.*"

Soveral was thereupon brought up and presented. A Portuguese lady who was there told me the Princess looked at him through her lorgnette and then, turning away, said in an audible voice to Menabrea:

"*Ce n'est que ça?*" (Is that all?)

But as everybody knows Soveral had his revenge, and became one of the most esteemed friends of Marlborough House.

The Portuguese Consul-General, who was also the Commercial Attaché, and had been reduced to a consulship as a sort of punishment for a scrape he had got into, was one of the greatest characters I have ever met. He was exactly like the pictures one sees of Sancho Panza, inordinately fat, with, nevertheless, a perfectly clear and healthy complexion, a small dark beard, streaked with grey, and wonderfully expressive, lustrous brown eyes, and really beautiful red lips and splendid white teeth. He was a *grand seigneur* to the marrow, and yet a convinced socialist. I once asked him why he embraced such extreme opinions, and his answer completely "flabbergasted" me. He said that the logical consequence of modern civilisation was to substitute the State for the family.

"You have taken away from the father," he said, "the right of life and death over his children. Inevitably the State will have to take them over."

Talking of the chances of a revolution in England, he said:

"If the revolution should ever come here, it will come through the Salvation Army. General Booth is the only man who has the necessary organisation. It is in my opinion very imprudent of your government to allow General Booth to arrogate to himself so much power."

He had three beautiful, unmarried daughters, the youngest of whom, Gabrielle, had the most perfect face which, I think, I have ever seen. She was supposed to have been remarked about, and very much admired, by the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.), who was a great connoisseur.

Indeed, the Prince had a reputation which I feel sure was undeserved. It would have been humanly impossible for any man to have led the strenuous life of pleasure with which he was credited, more especially for a man who had to work as hard as he did. There was scarcely a good-looking married

woman in those days regarding whom it was not whispered and given out that she had been "distinguished by the Prince of Wales" as the phrase was.

There were also many amusing stories told of him, the one concerning the fall from grace of Kinsky being in my opinion the funniest. It was told me by a foreign diplomatist, who was not undeserving of credence.

As everybody knows there is an ornamental pond in the grounds of Marlborough House. At a ball one evening Kinsky was walking close to this with a lady. They stood at the very brink admiring the effect of the reflection of the moon on the water. The Prince of Wales suddenly came upon the couple unawares, and could not resist an impish impulse. By giving Kinsky a very gentle shove from behind he made him slip just the very least bit into the lake, barely wetting his feet. Kinsky was furious; seeing, on turning round, that the offender was no less a person than the Prince of Wales, he controlled his anger, but determined on revenge. Concealing himself behind some bushes, he waited patiently for his opportunity. Very soon it presented itself. The Prince came along with a lady, and was engrossed in conversation. Ducking his head, Kinsky made a little run and with all his force butted into the middle of the Prince's back. The impetus was so great that His Royal Highness was sent flying plump into the water, and got a thorough ducking. But Kinsky knew that he had gone too far. He sold up his racing stable and retired to his Austrian estates.

The late King had a wonderful charm of manner. His tact was more than a mere knack, it came from a deep-seated kindliness of heart, combined with an imagination which enabled him to understand in an instant the frame of mind and feelings of others. The sense amounted almost to genius. Politeness has been aptly described as the small change of charity.

I was given an instance of this tactful politeness of the late

King's, by no less an authority than a hair-dresser. Being a great admirer of Thackeray's who, by the way, has been most wrongly accused of cynicism by people who did not want to understand him, I used to have my hair cut at Truefitt's, where Major Pendennis got his wigs. What a splendid name for a wig-maker! The artists who pursue their calling at Truefitt's, or indeed at any of the Bond Street establishments for that matter, are men of great experience (hairy and hoary) and one of these, a veteran, once told me how as a youngster he was summoned to attend on the then Prince of Wales. Ushered into the august presence he felt extremely shy and nervous. The Prince, evidently noticing this, told his equerry to withdraw, and as soon as he had left, gave a sigh of relief and exclaimed:

"Now we are alone, we can talk. Thank goodness! What countryman are you?"

"I come from Norfolk, sir," said the hairdresser.

"Ah!" said the Prince, "why, that's my county. Then we are sure to get on together.

And instantly the hair-dresser's shyness left him.

I had myself a funny experience. Walking along the street one day I was stopped by the traffic and observed a hansom close to me with the Prince of Wales inside. Automatically I raised my hand to take off my hat, when I was greeted with a most forbidding frown and shake of the head. The situation was plain. The Prince was *incognito* and did not want to be recognised, so I took no further notice and was rewarded by a grateful smile.

Hyde Park in the 'eighties was still a noble sight. The glory had not yet departed from the Row. Here the Prince of Wales would ride leisurely every morning, and there would usually be crowds of his friends round him, with whom he generally chaffed and laughed in the most genial fashion.

Another noble sight was the martial figure of the Archbishop of Canterbury, better known, so Andrew Lang once wrote in

the *Daily News*, as the father of the author of *Dodo*. He was the embodiment of the church militant here on earth, in his black cloak, which ought to have been a guardsman's but for the colour. His low-crowned hat with the brim well turned up, in his hand a hunting-crop held as though it were a field-marshal's baton; his face clean-shaven; his curly silver hair almost resting on his collar, and with his keen, penetrating grey eyes, he looked like the equestrian statue of Frederick the Great of Berlin, come to life. Fowler, his chaplain, who invariably accompanied him, quite suggested the clerical aide-de-camp.

Another fine cavalcade was that which escorted the presumed original of "Dodo" herself, now Mrs. Asquith, then Margot Tennant, with her sharp-eyed yet benevolent-looking father, Sir Charles Tennant, one side of her, and the elegant eighteenth century figure of her brother-in-law, Lord Ribblesdale, and crowds of admirers hanging on. A dignified though somewhat choleric figure was the Duke of Cambridge, and Lord Algernon Gordon Lennox was probably the finest horseman. Men rode in silk hats and trousers with straps to them, ladies had long habits and also wore silk hats.

The carriages in the afternoon during the season were really a marvellous sight, there were such endless crowds of them, the untidy state coaches of an earlier period were only brought out for gala occasions. For every-day use neat broughams, landaus and victorias were *de rigueur*, and England had admittedly brought the craft of carriage-building to such a degree of perfection that it had become a fine art. The gorgeous liveries of a former generation were little in evidence. Some antediluvians, like Sir Harry Verney, for instance, still drove about in great swinging yellow coaches, with flunkeys in silk stockings and powder, like a miniature Lord Mayor's show. The "smart set" as they were called, with the Prince and Princess of Wales at their head, affected a neat simplicity, their coachmen and footmen usually wore coats of buff-box cloth, and never looked

dressed up. I do not think that the beauty of English womanhood has deteriorated in recent years, and I certainly share the general opinion that if they dress a little less decorously the modern fashions are at least more becoming; but one did see more beauty in the Park in the 'eighties. To-day our young women go golfing and motoring and are not content with the restricted limits of Hyde Park, they go farther afield. In the 'eighties all the so-called "professional beauties" were on view every day. The Princess of Wales, accompanied by her charming daughters, drove in the Park regularly, in a simple two-horsed victoria. Then there was the lovely Countess of Dudley, with her senile husband (summer and winter had met in their case), and the magnificent Lady Lonsdale, afterwards Lady de Grey, and ever so many more. It was a veritable feast for the eyes.

But to return to my humble self. Among the friends I had made was Madame van de Velde, a very *grande dame*, the stepdaughter of Count de Launay, Italian Ambassador to the Court of Berlin, and Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps there. As a girl she had danced with the old German Emperor, and with the Crown Prince, Frederick of Prussia, and after a brilliant début, had settled down as the wife of a Belgian diplomatist *en disponibilité*. He was a meek little man, who thought himself a playwright, and had written a comedy which he asked me to get Beerbohm Tree to read.

"Don't tell my wife anything about it. She read the play, and told me she thought it would make a very good pantomime."

Needless to say this work of genius never saw the footlights.

The van de Veldes had a paying guest in no less a person than Bret Harte. It all came about in this way: Madame van de Velde's mother was a very rich woman, but there had been a serious quarrel, in which the mother was to blame; consequently she could not bring herself to forgive her daughter, and kept her short of funds. Mr. Arthur van de Velde was a poor man. They had a large family. It was necessary to do something,

and so Madame van de Velde had recourse to literature, and cultivated the society of publishers. Trübner was then the great international publisher in London, and at his house Madame van de Velde met Bret Harte. This great American genius had been appointed United States consul to Glasgow, but preferred to live most of his time in London, where he unfortunately gave way to habits of intemperance, and became an extinct volcano. Meeting him gave Madame van de Velde an idea. She proposed to revive his muse, and offered herself to him as an amanuensis. The scheme worked. Presently Bret Harte re-emerged into publicity. Novels under his name again began to appear, and commanded a ready sale. It was observed that they had become more conventional, that the sentimental love interest had grown stronger, and that they lacked much of that quaint virile and original humour that had characterised his earlier work, but they were distinctly interesting, they were well constructed, and they were "good sellers."

Several years after I first met Madame van de Velde, my half-sister sent for a hair-dresser, who had been strongly recommended to her. On entering her room he espied the portrait of Bret Harte.

"Ah!" he said. "I see you know Mr. Bret Harte. I also know him, I attend him. He lives at Madame van de Velde's and they work together. Do you know what they do? I will tell you. Madame van de Velde knows German. She translates all sorts of rubbishy German stories into English, and then Mr. Bret Harte puts in the local colour, and turns them into American novels. Very good business." I am not prepared to vouch for the truth of this statement; I but tell the tale as 'twas told to me.

At the house of this remarkable woman one met all sorts of interesting people, such as F. Crawford Grove, the son of my father's old friend the judge; Oscar Wilde, F. C. Philips, Lady Colin Campbell, to mention only a few.

Of these Oscar Wilde was certainly the most extraordinary. He started his career by forming a sort of mutual admiration society of two, of which the other member was Mrs. Langtry. He praised her beauty, and she his genius; it worked uncommonly well. When he got married a friend of his met him accidentally and cried:

"Hullo! Wilde! I hear you've got married. Is it true?"

"Yes," Wilde answered dejectedly; "Gone deuced cheap too."

I first met him at a dance to which he came with his wife on his return from their honeymoon. He had completely changed his appearance. His hair was one mass of little ringlets curled tight round his head. He looked, with his thick lips, like a negro painted white. His wife walked behind him, the victim chained to his triumphal car. The poor woman had a sad and pathetic victimised expression. He was asked by an admirer what he had done to his hair, and explained as follows:

"My wife said I ought to get my hair cut, when we were in Paris, so I thought I would go into the Louvre and look at the busts of the Roman Emperors, who had all short hair. Presently my eyes fell on the bust of Nero. Nero, you know, was a delightfully wicked man. I therefore decided to have my hair cut like Nero's. I went to my hair-dresser and asked whether he had ever been to the Louvre. '*Mais oui, monsieur*' he said: 'Do you know the bust of Nero?' But he confessed that he had not noticed the bust of Nero, so I told him to go to the Louvre and study the bust of Nero. Next day I went to him and asked him whether he had studied the bust of Nero. '*Mais oui, monsieur*,' he said. So I told him to do my hair like Nero's, and this is the result."

At one memorable dinner of Madame Van de Velde's at which C. A. Dana, the editor of the *Sun*, Sir John Robinson of the *Daily News*, and Arthur Brisbane, the famous American journalist, F. C. Philips, and of course, Bret Harte, were present, Oscar Wilde, after the ladies were gone, proceeded to lay down the

law in his usual didactic way, and said he was going to give a course of lectures for men only on the proper treatment of wives. He said woman was by nature a self-sacrificing animal, and was not happy unless she was doing something to make herself miserable. "If you wish to retain the affections of your wife you must be perpetually giving her opportunities for self-sacrifice for your sake, otherwise she will soon tire of you."

Somebody suggested that he was no doubt speaking from experience. Wilde was evidently annoyed, so much so that the ready repartee did not spring to his lips.

A few years later, Sir Reginald Macdonald told me that Oscar Wilde had so deeply offended the late Duke of Cambridge that he had completely forfeited his friendship. He had invited him to dinner, and by way of floral ornament had placed a huge cauliflower in a flower-vase, and put it on the table as a centre-piece.

Mr. Arthur Brisbane, who was at Madame van de Velde's dinner-party above referred to, had just won his spurs and was regarded as a young man of brilliant promise, an expectation which time has justified. When we joined the ladies the beautiful daughters of Madame van de Velde arranged themselves in a circle round this budding genius, and, as is the charming custom of their sex, proceeded to burn conversational incense before him. The young man was seated on a light blue silk damask armchair, and his feet rested on a footstool covered in the same delicate material. Presently the American party rose to go, the others had already left, and I soon found myself among the last of the guests. All at once I heard little shrieks of laughter, and discovered that the young ladies had returned to the attitude of adoration, but by this time the light-blue damask silk footstool was the centre of attraction and the cause of laughter. The unhappy young American had evidently fallen a victim to the varnishing habit which was then very rife, but in his preoccupation whilst laying down the law to

the worshipping damsels, he had forgotten all about the varnish, had placed his foot sideways on the footstool, and the "jam" had come off. There was the mark of the beast, plain for all eyes to see, and there were the van de Velde girls sitting round it, convulsed with laughter. At that critical and psychological moment the doors opened and Mr. Arthur Brisbane entered. He had come to fetch his opera hat which he had left behind him. Tableau! He took in the situation at once, retrieved his opera-hat and fled.

F. C. Philips was a great friend of Madame van de Velde's and I used to meet him frequently at her house. A good many years before he ran a play at Manchester, taking the *nom de guerre* of Fairlie, his business manager being a man called Moss. H. J. Byron was running a play there at the same time, and on being asked how he was doing he is reported to have replied:

"Oh! I am doing very well, and Moss is doing Fairlie."

Bret Harte was an excellent raconteur, and, when he came to the point of a story, his eyes used to get quite small and twinkle impishly, while his strong mouth was wreathed in a roguish smile. He was, however, an indolent lethargic talker, and could not be easily roused to let himself go.

He used to tell the story of the officer charged with being drunk, who had instructed his servant to call him early, which was adduced as evidence of sobriety at the time, until a member of the court-martial elicited in cross-examination that the reason he had given was that he was Queen of the May. This venerable Tennysonian chestnut he retailed with great gusto.

He once told me a story all to myself at which he laughed immoderately. It was about H. J. Byron, who had a horse in training for some race. One day, whilst at Ramsgate, Byron received a telegram from his trainer to the following effect:

"X (whatever the name of the horse may have been) not well, shall I give him a ball."

To which Byron replied: "Yes, but don't invite too many people."

The van de Velde household, comprising innumerable sons and daughters whom their mother used to describe with an expressive foreign shrug of the shoulders, as "a funny lot," constituted a most charming and cultured family, and many were the happy evenings I was privileged to spend there.

Another interesting friend of those days was Captain Fonseca Vaz, the Portuguese Naval Attaché, a very handsome young fellow when I first knew him, who spoke both French and English perfectly, and had a remarkable knowledge of English literature. He always maintained that English women were better educated and more cultured than English men, who rarely had any interest beyond sport; a view, by the way, shared by Ruskin, who used to lament to me that the young men of my generation were entirely indifferent to their country and cared only for enjoyment. The war has, I think, refuted this wholesale accusation of want of patriotism, and while no doubt too much importance is given to games in our public school education, it must not be forgotten that the average Englishman hates to appear "clever," he is not a *poseur*, and I have been literally taken off my feet by the unsuspected knowledge which some young fellow, supposed to take no interest in anything that did not come under the head of pleasure of some sort, has unexpectedly manifested.

Captain Vaz, after leading a butterfly existence as a man about town, and successfully evading the numerous matrimonial traps that were set for him, finally married a remarkably beautiful Argentine widow of great wealth, a Mme. Martino, and blossomed out. He was created Count de Sena, took a corner house in Queen's Gate, then a fashionable thoroughfare, and entertained lavishly. When Don Carlos of Portugal, later to be assassinated after ascending the Portuguese throne, came to London with his charming Orleans consort, de Sena gave the royal pair a dinner at his house, followed by a reception. In honour of the Orleans Princess the whole house was decor-

ated with la France roses, thus the doors, the mantelpieces, and all the wainscoting of the house were framed in these gorgeous flowers. The invited guests, besides the Diplomatic Corps, included the *fine fleur* of English Roman Catholic society. Don Carlos, a fat, genial, good-humoured prince, who never, in the whole course of his rather self-indulgent life, cherished a vindictive thought or had been guilty of an angry deed towards anybody, was the last person one would have expected to be singled out for political vengeance. But it is generally the most harmless who are the most frequent victims. The amiable Louis XVI., the noble Alexander II., the gentle Nicholas II., the utterly kindly George I. of Greece, these are the names that spring at once to one's mind. On the occasion of the de Sena dinner, at least, the royal party were bubbling over with geniality and good nature. I may here be allowed a passing reference to Roman Catholic society. Not being a Roman Catholic myself, what I am about to say is purely "objective," and absolutely free from religious bias. I thought it was a happy accident that led me into a Roman Catholic set, where I found the finest and most splendid historical traditions of this country combined with an international culture and polish which made all social relations supremely delightful. There was nothing narrow or circumscribed in that set, no limitations. The ladies of that set had a sweetness and charm much of which had been derived from their convent training abroad, they had, moreover, the distinction of race and tradition. One of the most beautiful of these was General Sir Henry Bedingfield's daughter, then there were the Arundell family with its numerous ramifications, the de Traffords, the Tichbornes, the Petres, to say nothing of the Feildings.

In 1885 there occurred what is known in history as the Pendjdeh incident, when some Russian troops attacked and virtually massacred without warning the Afghan army. Some ten years later a Russian officer who took part in that "military operation" explained it to me in Tiflis. The then Captain Yate had made

a secret report on the Afghan troops in which he stated his opinion that they were fit to meet and fight any European army. A copy of this report got into the possession of General Komaroff who instantly decided to demonstrate that the Afghan soldier was no match for the Russian. The forces at General Komaroff's disposal were small; they consisted of one division of riflemen, some Cossacks and light artillery. To have openly attacked the Afghan army with this small force would have been madness, but to surprise them at night was a very different matter, and, as everybody knows the Afghans were decimated. It was a most treacherous act, the only excuse adduced was the alleged probability that if the Russians had not surprised and defeated the Afghans they would themselves have been attacked and overwhelmed. It was the kind of excuse which used to be given in America for shooting a man who placed his hand on his hip-pocket. Afghanistan was our ally, and there was a great public outcry in England against Russia's high-handed arbitrary proceeding. Mr. Robert Michel, an official in the India Office, even wrote a letter to the *Globe* dated from that department insisting that we should make this a *casus belli*. The attention of the Russian Government was drawn to this letter, and they instructed their ambassador to protest against such language from a British Government official. The matter was referred to the Council for India, who solemnly met and tried to put their finger on Mr. Michel. Now Mr. Michel, who had been on the staff of the British Embassy at St. Petersburg, had been appointed Russian expert to the India Office with a salary of £600 per annum., but his duties were not onerous. One day I had occasion to call on him at the India Office. I presented myself at about half-past twelve, and was told he had not yet arrived. Half an hour later, when I came again I was informed that he had just gone out to lunch, and never returned to the office after that meal. No doubt he worked very assiduously at home, but the India Office had completely forgotten about his existence!

The unfortunate letter in the *Globe* led to his being pensioned off, and I understand the post has remained vacant ever since.

When I saw how great an agitation was being got up, I went to my friend, Captain (later General Sir James) Wolfe Murray, who was running the Russian section of the Intelligence Branch, and asked him to put my name down for an interpretership in the event of war. Murray looked at me with his humorous, quizzical smile and said:

"Don't you worry. I've got your name down already. But, of course there isn't going to be any war."

I expressed my surprise, when he quietly retorted:

"How can we fight Russia? We haven't got an army!"

I have often ruminated over that answer. We were indeed in a very much more precarious position than the general public ever seemed to understand. Here were we, a vast empire, probably the largest empire known to history, with commitments and points of contact everywhere, and always, by reason of our prosperity and vast possessions, exciting the envy and cupidity of all our neighbours, and yet so defenceless that we were not even able to protect our ally against outrage, for but three years before Lord Charles Beresford had demonstrated that our navy was as hopelessly inadequate as our army. The growth and continued existence of Great Britain from the days of the destruction of the Spanish Armada by a gale to the collapse of the Central European Powers in 1918 admits of only one interpretation. It is providential. Well may we offer up to the Almighty that heartfelt prayer: "Give peace in our time, oh Lord! for there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, oh Lord!" Although when the country is in danger we all spring to arms. Yet this might conceivably be too late.

CHAPTER VIII

BOHEMIAN DAYS

EMINENT American authorities on success advise the beginner in the battle of life to "get on or get out." As I found my chances of getting on at the Institution of Civil Engineers, after a strenuous five years, to be so circumscribed as to be negligible, I proceeded to scan the advertisement columns of the papers with a view to getting out, and at last obtained through this medium the appointment of editor to a monthly publication connected with the building trades. The salary offered was double what I was getting, and the duties light, leaving me plenty of time for other work. I was already supplementing my income by regular contributions to the *Athenæum* and *Academy*, in the shape of reviews on works dealing with Russia. My friends in Moscow used to send me such new Russian works as they thought interesting to the British public, which I also reviewed, and in this way I was able to bring to the notice of English readers a good deal of what was being published in Russia. I had, moreover, two translations to my credit. One was Professor Storojenko's *Life of Robert Greene*, which Professor Minto had described in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as the best, and which I translated for Dr. Grosart's "Huth Library," receiving for that labour of love the huge sum of £15, three times as much as Milton was paid for *Paradise Lost*. However I had my exceeding great reward when several years later I was told by Professor Gosse that he regarded my humble effort as one of the treasures of his library. The other book was Nemirovitch-Dantchenko's *Personal Reminiscences of General Skobeloff*. This was published on what was called the "half-

profits" system, which I was speedily to discover meant "nothing" for the author. The book was well reviewed in all the papers, and was widely read. The critics were kind enough to say that it did not read like a translation. I had thus made my bow to the public, and by accepting the editorship of a periodical I was now definitely launched on a literary career.

A member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, whose half-brother was a poet, strongly advised me to join the Savage Club; he got Brandon Thomas, who was then a promising young actor and author of several successful curtain-raisers, to propose me, and so I very soon blossomed out into a full-blown Savage. It is nearly forty years since I joined that happy unconventional nursing-ground of good-fellowship and *camaraderie*, and the man who succeeded in getting me made a member did me the best turn that anybody has ever done me. That club was at once a shock and an eye-opener, it was a place, in those days, in which a man, especially a young man, when thrown in, had either to sink or swim. I immediately proceeded to swim, but I grieve to say that I saw many a man sink there, though it is an open question whether those who went under would have succeeded in keeping their heads above water in other surroundings. It was a curious place and a hard school, but a splendid training ground for those who had sufficient self-restraint to stay the course.

When I joined the Savage Club it had just turned the corner, but had not yet become the national institution it is to-day. King Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, had already graced it by becoming an honorary member, the famous fancy-dress ball had been held at the Albert Hall, and the club was well before the public. It had not yet, however, become necessary for a distinguished man to dine there before he could claim to have received the imprimatur of celebrity, as it is at present. Besides, the members were very different. Those were the days of true Bohemianism, of which no trace has now been left.

Journalists, artists and actors have since then become respectable, very few could be justly so described in those days, if by respectability, smugness and conventionality are meant. It was believed to be a sign of genius to be eccentric in those days. Byron Webber used to call us "fly-by-night journalists," and it was firmly believed that one of our members at least, had no home and never went to bed. Two inquisitive Savages with Sherlock Holmes instincts, determined to settle this question definitely, and follow him after he had left the club. He strolled up St. Martin's Lane, through Seven Dials, and so drifted into Tottenham Court Road, along which he proceeded leisurely northwards till he finally reached the ultimate limits of Camden Town. Here he stopped at a coffee-stall, and had some refreshment, while the two sleuth-hounds concealed themselves. Presently he sauntered forth and continued his course towards Hampstead till he got to another coffee-stall, where he had some more coffee. By this time it was daybreak, and a glorious dawn heralded the promise of a splendid day. He looked round, stretched his arms, gave a long yawn, and was overheard to say to the coffee-stall keeper: "It is about time, I think, to go back to my club," whereupon the two defeated amateur detectives fled.

Another member of the club, and certainly one of the most gifted and brilliant, a playwright of great promise, an inimitable raconteur, unfailing at repartee, was believed to be in the habit of spending his nights on the Thames Embankment.

On the other hand we had Irving and Toole, Wyndham and Kendal for members. Charles Williams, the famous war correspondent, who had worked on the *Standard* when Lord Salisbury was his colleague there, and still maintained friendly relations with that austere and rather inaccessible statesman, made the club his headquarters when he was not scouring the ends of the earth. The same was true of Bennett Burleigh, that giant of nerve and courage. Fred. C. Villiers was another

of the band of war correspondents, together with the famous Melton Prior, both black-and-white artists. There was a long-standing feud between the latter and the irascible Charles Williams, who had some fancied grievance against the genial little artist.

H. J. Byron had died the year before I joined. Gus Harris was an obscure actor, and had not yet developed into the Augustus Druriolanus immortalised by *Punch*, Weedon Grossmith was still a painter, Sir Julius Benedict had just married a young wife, and was not seen so frequently amongst us as before. David Christie Murray was in the zenith of his fame, and was giving rise to great expectations. Then there was that cultured English gentleman, Hilary Skinner, who, with such a name, could not escape becoming a barrister, and being a barrister must needs dabble in journalism. He was one of the "old men" of the profession, and had many quaint stories to tell of the Zouaves in Mexico what time Napoleon III. had dreamed the creation of a Mexican Empire, and had basely abandoned Maximilian to his fate; other "statesmen" less remote have done quite as reprehensible things. Skinner had also been through the Franco-German War for the *Daily News*, and had got ahead, on one stirring occasion, of the redoubtable Billy Russell of *The Times*, the Nestor of war correspondents. In later years Skinner, who was quite comfortably off, contented himself with contesting forlorn-hope elections in the Liberal interest, without having the remotest ambition to become a legislator. He had an interesting experience when he stood for South Paddington and was heckled. "Are you in favour of the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill?" he was asked.

"Before answering the last speaker," he replied, "I would like to say that Mrs. Skinner is on the platform." (Cheers.) "You will easily recognise my wife by the very beautiful bouquet of red roses kindly and thoughtfully presented to her by the Young Men's Christian Association of South Paddington."

(Cheers for the Young Men's Christian Association of South Paddington.) "On my left you will observe a young lady, she is my wife's sister." (Cheers.) "You will easily identify her by the charming bouquet of white roses gracefully presented to her by the Young Women's Christian Association of South Paddington." (Cheers for the Young Women's Christian Association of South Paddington.) "You will now understand why I must ask you to excuse me from answering the last speaker's question."

I am afraid that the stories told in the Savage Club Smoke Room were not always quite as delicate or fragrant.

There was, for instance, the terrible Gwyllym Crowe, composer of the once popular "See-saw" waltz, who was a deadly Atheist, and in the habit of delivering himself of his profanities without mincing his words. Arthur Matthison, however, once rebuked him with the following perhaps also rather profane impromptu:

> We've heard in language highly spiced
> That Crowe does not believe in Christ,
> But what concerns him most to know
> Is whether Christ believes in Crowe.

Then there was Baker Greene, leader-writer of the *Morning Post*, an Irish giant with an eye-glass, a retired army-surgeon, who had been through the Crimean War, and was now a barrister and a journalist. On the formation of the Liberal-Unionist Party, a Liberal-Unionist Club was formed, and it was on the day of the opening of this that I chanced to drop into the Savage Club for a supper of tripe and stout, for which the club was then famed, when Baker Greene came in and sat down beside me.

"I have put my foot in it again," he said, "I am always making myself unpopular, and yet I have always the best intentions."

"What have you done now?" I asked.

"I have just come from the opening of that new Liberal-

Unionist Club in Albemarle Street, and they made me speak. I did not know what to say, but I was expected to recommend it in some way, and explain its advantages, so, after doing the best I could, I wound up by advising them to join and pointed out that the club would partake of the nature of a fence, and members would be able to climb down whichever side might happen to be the most convenient. Somehow these harmless remarks of mine seemed to have caused great annoyance."

It was Baker Greene who asked Sir John Somers Vine an historic question.

Vine had come to the club flown with insolence and wine, and boasting that he had just purchased his old ancestral 'ome, Vine Court, where he would be pleased to see any brother Savage, who would always find a cigar and a whisky and soda.

"It's the place I was born at, boys."

Then Baker Greene, with his inimitable drawl, turning his eye-glass full on Vine, asked:

"Where did you say you were born?"

"Vine Court," Sir Somers proudly replied.

"Oh!" said Baker Greene, with an air of languid disappointment, "Vine Court.—What number?"

When Baker Greene suddenly died one night in his sleep at his chambers in the Temple, no less than three charming ladies claimed to be each the sole possessor of his affections.

The greatest character of the club and the finest elocutionist without exception that I have ever heard was undoubtedly E. J. Odell. He was like the lilies of the field, but his recitations on Saturday nights were a treat, a pure delight. In later years he grew indolent, his repertoire becoming more and more restricted and less artistic, but in the old days he did some really beautiful things. He was quick at repartee and it is of him related, when asked whether he knew a man with one eye of the name of Brown, that he answered: "No. What is the name of his other eye?"

One of the most delightful and amusing of the Savages in the eighties was dear old Major Fenwick. Narrow-minded people, who did not understand his temperament, regarded him as unscrupulous, and it is to be feared that from the financial point of view he was not always satisfactory. However that may be, I never had occasion to enter into financial relations with him, and always found him a gallant and loyal friend. Being in his company was a liberal education, and like living one of Lever's novels. He had served in the 42nd, been through the Crimean War, served in India, married a rich Armenian, run horses, owned papers, done everything, and was, when I knew him: "in reduced circumstances," but always cheery; full of splendid courage and absolutely undefeated. His stories were delightfully breezy and bracing, told generally with his hat firmly placed on his head, his umbrella, an imaginary sword, sloped over his shoulder, his voice strong and resonant with a slight silver *timbre* in it, thus he would pace the room, the words bubbling up and occasionally bursting like bombs.

I have only remembered two of his stories, one of which is a little too robust for cold print, the other referred to the curious chances of war. At the battle of the Alma an ensign who was carrying the colours of his regiment was suddenly seized with an unaccountable sense of fear. He had too much presence of mind to run away, so, winding the colours round him, he laid himself down in a ditch and waited till these terrors had passed. The regiment was virtually decimated, and the ensign who had so pusillanimously saved the colours was rewarded with the V.C. I knew an incorrigible liar in Moscow who once asserted in his own defence that there was always some foundation of truth for what he said, and the same line might be adopted with regard to this story of Major Fenwick's, for Kinglake in his *Invasion of the Crimea*, speaking of the 7th Fusiliers, says that the regiment bought its triumph with blood. "In killed and wounded it lost twelve officers and more than two hundred

men. . . . For some time one of the colours of the regiment was missing, but it did not at any time fall into the hands of the enemy. It was safe in the charge of some soldiers belonging to the Royal Welsh." In a note he adds: "The colour, I believe, was found lying upon the ground, but how that came to happen I do not know, and I have not thought it necessary to find out, because the colour was never for a moment lost."

Major Fenwick was elected on the Committee of the Club, when he did me a good turn for which I shall be for ever grateful, though it was, perhaps, a little irregular. The proprietors of the periodical I was editing expressed a desire to become members of the Savage. They were very well-meaning people who paid me my salary with exemplary regularity, and did not interfere with the literary conduct of the paper, but they were scarcely suited for so weird a collection of eccentric geniuses, such as Harold Frederick for instance, as the Savage Club contained. I represented to them that I did not think they would find the club congenial, but they insisted and formulated their request in such a manner as to make it a sort of veiled ultimatum. I put my case before dear old Henty, Fenwick, and one or two others. I did not want to run the risk of having my "mugs," as proprietors of papers were then very unsuitably called, black-balled, which might have had unpleasant consequences for me. Fenwick saved the situation.

"My dear fellow," he said, "we have a big waiting list. Put 'em down and we'll keep 'em on it till you get a better job, and then we'll pill the bounders." Henty fully concurred, and this was the indefensible course adopted.

Perhaps the finest looking man at the Savage Club was my friend, E. N. Alpe, the solicitor to Somerset House, whose book on the Stamp Act is still running through new editions, and is the authoritative work on this vexatious subject. Alpe was about six feet three, and broad in proportion, he had blue

eyes and fair hair, and was the amateur heavy-weight champion. He told me he had only once come across his match, and that was a Covent Garden porter, who had fallen foul of him. After sparring for twenty minutes they both felt that they were not making any impression on each other, so Alpe gave the man half a crown, and the fight was declared off by mutual consent.

Alpe had the reputation of being an ill-tempered man, though in fairness I am bound to say that I never saw that side of him, and we have spent days on the river together, which I always consider a test. Nothing, in my opinion, is better calculated to bring out a man's real character than a day's hard sculling. But Alpe was always sweetness itself in a boat. Once, he admitted to me, in confidence, he did lose his temper very badly. He was walking home along the Embankment from a City dinner, at which he had probably drunk not wisely but too well, when he encountered a Salvation Army band. It seemed to overtake him as he was crossing the road, and he somehow got mixed up with it. In his attempt to extricate himself he lost his temper and began to see red. Whether the Salvation Army band hustled him or would not let him pass, he did not explain, but I gather they took up a warlike and hostile attitude. He admitted to me with deep contrition that he thrashed the lot, smashed their somewhat discordant brazen musical instruments, and knocked a hole in their big drum. It was of course a lamentable blunder, like the Battle of Balaclava, but quite as heroic. The *dénouement* was a bathos, from the sublime to the ridiculous, for the police intervened, and on their appearance Alpe was immediately amenable to authority. They took him to Bow Street, where he was asked for his name and address. He handed them his official card, it was the only one he had with him. The tact and sagacity of the London police are proverbial. They at once comprehended that this incident, harmless in itself, might develop into a scandal, and so it was decided to hush the matter up. Clearly the Salvation Army Band gave

evidence on this, as it has on so many other occasions, of a truly Christian spirit.

I remember being told one morning that there had been a great scene in the card-room of the club the day before, and that those who had witnessed it had felt awed and tremulous. We had a blustering young member who was rather a bully, he called himself "Captain" because he had once held a temporary commission in the Servian army during the Russo-Turkish War. This man considered himself an authority on every conceivable subject, and had a way of enforcing an argument by inviting his opponent to come outside and have it out. As he was a very powerful man, and looked as though he was made of whip-cord and steel, the degenerate Savages invariably chose "the line of least resistance" and waived their opinions. On the day in question it happened that this formidable fire-eater sat down to whist with Alpe for his partner. During the rubber he objected to something Alpe had done, and told him he did not know how to play. Alpe, good-humouredly ordered him to shut up, whereat the "captain" exploded and invited Alpe to come outside and he would show him who was the better man, etc. Alpe did not show the least annoyance, but smilingly threw a match-box straight into the "captain's" face, saying very gently: "Be quiet."

It was a terrible moment. The members present shivered. What was going to happen? Bloodshed? Murder? Would it surprise the reader very much to learn that as a matter of fact nothing happened? That match-box, well aimed, had a remarkably calming effect on the pugnacious "captain," who had once been known to challenge a rather timorous journalist to a duel.

Such incidents were rare, for the Savage Club was the home of good-fellowship, although I must plead guilty to having once got up a "spoof" row for the special edification of a new member. Entering the smoke-room one day I found its only occupants

to be this new member, who was still on probation, and Billy Barrett, the flautist, whom we used to call the flutocrat. Immediately I espied Barrett I went for him, and he for me, our language getting more and more expressive until the new member's hair began visibly to rise. Finally I seized a carafe of water and raised it in the air in the attitude of hurling it at Barrett's head, when the new member, who had by this time got as white as a sheet, incontinently fled, whereupon we ordered drinks.

All the members were not heroes, some indeed were very pathetic figures. Conspicuous among those was a poor artist called Fitzgerald, a sweet old man who used to give us inimitable recitations at our Saturday night house dinners. Fitzgerald's history was tragic. Years ago he had been tempted by the prospect of immediate pelf to become "a ghost," a false step from which he had never recovered. I had his romantic story from himself. In his early days he eked out his living by giving lessons, and among his pupils was a very charming fashionable married woman. Suddenly her husband died, and left her in comparatively poor circumstances. She therefore determined to take to painting as a profession, but her ability was not equal to her intentions. She had no talent for painting; this trifling drawback did not, however, daunt her splendid spirit. Fitzgerald was asked to paint the pictures, while she undertook to sell them and divide the proceeds. In his inexperience, he eagerly closed with the offer, a studio was engaged in a fashionable neighbourhood, and here the lady could be seen touching up the pictures which Fitzgerald had really produced, whilst her admirers flocked round her, praised her courage, and bought the works of art at fancy prices, more from charity than for their merit. Of course, this suited Fitzgerald perfectly. He was reaping a golden harvest, besides putting in some very excellent work for which he was getting better prices than he could have commanded in the market. But this state of things was too good to last. One of the lady's admirers was a very wealthy

man; with generous emotion he had been watching what looked like praiseworthy industry and a plucky fight against adversity. He felt it was a shame that so beautiful and noble a woman should be condemned to toil in a studio, and so he offered her his hand and his heart with a life of ease. This was indeed what the pseudo lady-artist had been artfully scheming for, and so, after a little seemly coyness, she at last blushingly accepted this middle-aged good fairy in trousers, and poor Fitzgerald's occupation was gone. He continued to paint, and, sometimes, to sell, pictures, but he could no longer hope to receive the fancy prices which he had formerly divided with his fashionable patroness, moreover he had improvidently taken unto himself a wife. However, although he was very poor, he was very happy, for his marriage had been a love-match, and was one uninterrupted honeymoon, until in old age the partner of his joys and sorrows died; nor did he long survive her. Thus ended this romantic though perhaps rather squalid idyll. After all, worldly success is not invariably the road to happiness. The man who has found his own soul, though he may have failed to fill his pockets, or stir the minds of others, has made a greater success of his life than many a millionaire.

Appearances are proverbially deceitful. I know no better illustration of that, than the famous Adrian Ross (whose real name is Ropes) who looks like, and actually was, a Cambridge professor. Who would believe, meeting for the first time this solemn, stately and scholarly figure, that he was in the presence of the funniest man in England, the man who wrote some of the most successful lyrics of modern musical comedy? Ropes is not only a humorous writer, his impromptus are quite as good as his songs. He once boasted to a lady that he would there and then, on the spur of the moment, parody any proverb she might like to name; so she challenged him to parody "Where there's a will, there's a way." "Nothing easier," he replied; "where there's a frill there's a fray."

Talking of parodies to proverbs calls to my mind that very brilliant *litterateur*, who was never a Savage by the way, Texeira de Mattos. He was a Bohemian to the backbone, but a Bohemian of a different genius, for there are as many varieties of the species, as there are of every other. There are Bohemians who have the country of their origin writ large all over them, and others whose Bohemianism is less obvious. They are clothed like other people, have the same manners and appearance as other people, but they do not, because it is not in their nature to, live like other people. Texeira de Mattos was one of these. I do not believe that he ever did anything banal in his life. The only conventional act of which he was ever guilty was his marriage, and then he married the widow of Willie Wilde, and that surely was not a banal thing to do. Texeira de Mattos, had he been a little more banal, would have made a great name for himself; as it was, he preferred to edit and translate the banalities of others to publishing his own, and therein perhaps he showed his wisdom.

His best parody of a proverb is already a little dated, and might need as many annotations as an equal number of lines from Chaucer, a few years hence. "Absinthes make the tart grow fonder." It is very bold, but already getting obscure. In time absinthe will be as little known as sack, and as for "tart," that has already become antiquated.

More enduring, because based not on transitory phrases but on the eternal human, are his test-of-humour stories which appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, and are still delicately fragrant with his quaint elusive wit.

The first of the series is the story of the man at the dinner party who absent-mindedly plunged his hands in the salad-bowl and then rubbed them on his hair, and cried out in dismay, when asked why he had done so: "Oh! was it salad? I thought it was spinach!"

The second relates how a man was travelling across the great

American continent with a basket on which he bestowed great care.

"Stranger! What have you got in that basket?"

"Guess I've got a mongoose in that basket."

"Got a mongoose? Why, what do you want with a mongoose?"

"Guess a mongoose kills snakes. Well, I have a brother out West who sees snakes. Thought I'd bring him a mongoose to kill those darned snakes."

"Why, you dog-blamed idiot, those ain't real snakes he sees!"

"No, no more is this a real mongoose."

In both these stories there is an artistic atmosphere, something *insaisissable*; the third is purely brutal. It is the story of the man with the wooden leg in the railway carriage full of passengers, and the affable old gentleman bubbling over with sympathy for his fellow-creatures and curiosity. Having asked all kinds of intimate questions of the various passengers, his eyes suddenly 'lighted on the man with the wooden leg who was surlily sitting in a corner.

"Pray, sir, would you mind telling me how you came to lose your leg?"

"You have asked a lot of impertinent questions," the surly one replied, "but I don't mind answering this one, on one condition."

"Of course, any condition you may please to put I shall be glad to fulfil."

"Well then, it is that you ask no further questions."

"Certainly not."

"It was bitten off!"

I first met Texeira de Mattos at the house of a very remarkable woman of French extraction who rejoiced in the name of Postlethwaite, and knew everybody, including Gladstone. She had a very charming and precocious little girl. One day Jerome K. Jerome came to call on this lady. He had already made a great hit with his books, especially *Three Men in a Boat* (*to say*

nothing of the Dog), and was making unsuccessful attempts to produce popular plays, all of which had so far been failures. The precocious little girl, who had been taking the air with her governess, presently put in an appearance, and was introduced to Jerome, whom she stared at with open-eyed wonder.

"Are you the author of *Three Men in a Boat* and of *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*? What a clever man you must be! Why don't you write a play?"

But to return to the Savage Club. It was full of delightful people. Sir Morell Mackenzie's throat-specialist rival, Lennox Browne, who, in contradistinction to his great colleague, was called Immoral Browne, was a member, and had known all the *prime donne* of his generation. But even more interesting than he was Teddie Michael, that great impresario, who had managed for Lily Langtry, Mme. Eames and Mme. Melba. Originally a Quaker, Michael had run away from home as a boy and joined a tramp steamer. He had had an adventurous career. Among other things he once owned a soap works in California, which was largely patronised by the Chinese laundrymen of that progressive State, but when it came to collect the money due for the soap received by these astute Celestials, they mingled with their fellow-countrymen, and as one Chinaman is exactly like another it was impossible to distinguish or identify them. Thus the soap business proved unremunerative. How he drifted into becoming an impresario I never heard, but he had many weird stories to tell of Mrs. Langtry, for whom he had the greatest admiration. During one of her tours in the United States the lessee of a theatre at which she was booked to give a certain number of "shows" suddenly died. As he was a very popular character it was proposed to close the theatre for that night. Mrs. Langtry quite approved. "Very nice and proper idea," she said, and then turning to Teddie Michael, said in a matter-of-fact tone of voice: "Let me see, Mr. Michael, you have the contract; that would mean how much to me?"

This was not exactly what had been expected! It was consequently decided not to close the theatre after all that night.

Here is another story of Michael's about a lady of a different kind. Driving home on a drag from the races one day a well-known professional lady observed an admirer of hers looking very glum.

"Hullo! Algy!" she cried. "What are you sulking about?"

"I'll tell you what it is," Algy replied. "I am getting pretty sick and tired of playing second fiddle."

The lady seemed amazed.

"Considering that you are a younger son with a small allowance, you ought to think yourself jolly lucky to be in the orchestra at all!"

As I turn my mental vision back through the many years during which I have enjoyed the revivifying atmosphere of the cheery Savage Club, faces, like ghosts, pass before me in quick succession. There was, for instance, E. J. Wade, the Assistant Librarian of the India Office, who had begun his career in the Church of England, which he had been compelled to leave for reasons not entirely unconnected with the fair sex. He had written more books of travel than the most industrious of globe-trotters could possibly have dreamed of, but his name was not to be found on any title-pages. He was the author of the learned works of Pagett, M.P., which that enlightened legislator produced on his return from his journey to India. In the excellent library of the India Office, Wade had explored Thibet, crossed the Himalayas, and searched for the sources of the Nile. But he was a modest man, and did not obtrude his own personality, he preferred to stand aside and let others have the glory, while he took his reward in a more tangible form. A man with a great presence, a flowing beard and a noble dignity, lofty and rather sacerdotal manners, he looked the high-priest from top to toe, and yet, when it pleased him to unbend, jovial withal, though

ever courteous and distinguished. One could imagine how he would wink to his brother augurs at the Delphic Oracle of the India Office. After many years of assiduous labour, during part of which he ornately filled the post of honorary secretary to the club, he retired, at a great age, on a pension, and died in the odour of sanctity at Ealing. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

Then there was W. H. Linford, the diplomatist of the Post Office, who used to negotiate treaties with the Post Offices of foreign powers, and who dressed and looked like an ambassador, always immaculate, with exquisite manners and funny stories from strange lands. His colleague, "Jack" Stokes, was a man of a very different type. He had commenced life as reading boy to Cardinal Newman, came of an old Catholic family, and brought with him into the club the cultured air of the famous monasteries of the Continent. In spite of his ascetic appearance he made one feel that he had been brought up on good liqueurs, he could discourse learnedly of wines whose grape had been kissed by the sun, he was an excellent after-dinner speaker, and everything he did and said had a sort of fine vintage flavour about it. Careless in his dress, he was said to be careless of other things, and it was rumoured of him that he had once, when sent across Italy to Brindisi in charge of H.B.M. mails, lost them. Seeing that the mails were conveyed in three sealed railway-waggons, this was regarded, in official quarters, as a stupendous piece of negligence. How he managed so to distinguish himself I never ascertained. He was a charming personality and a great raconteur. He was believed to have devilled for Harold Frederick, and to have written most of that eccentric genius's despatches to the *New York Times*.

But of all the Savages I have known the most typical and the kindest-hearted was, without question, Phil May. He joined the club much later than I did, and his meteoric career was brief, for he was in the prime of life when he died. A curious thing about Phil May was his strong facial resemblance to

Pope Pius IX., but anybody less pontifical in manner—and conduct—it would be difficult to imagine. Generous to a fault, he could never turn a petitioner empty away, and many were the "fivers" which his more necessitous friends borrowed of him. His life was one continuous charity, he never did a mean or unkindly act, and the sweetness of his disposition was almost childlike. Unfortunately perfection is not granted to mortal man, and Phil May had the defects of his good qualities. His love of good fellowship and his jovial nature led him into convivial habits which unhappily hastened his end. Leaving the club one evening in the condition in which, it is to be feared, he too frequently got, he hailed a hansom and told the cabbie to drive him home. The cabbie asked him for the address, but poor Phil May was too far gone and too inarticulate to give the necessary instructions. Leaning against a lamp-post, to steady himself, he pulled out his sketch-book and proceeded to make a drawing of his house. They say there is a special Providence over children and drunken people, and it certainly was a strange coincidence that the cabman should have been familiar with Kensington, and should have recognised the house from Phil May's sketch, for he brought him safely home.

This was very different from the adventure of another Savage, though not an habitué, Beerbohm Tree, who told a cabman, after supper, to drive him home.

"Where to?" asked the cabman, looking down on Tree from his trap-door.

"West," said Tree wearily, "far away West."

The cabman took him along Piccadilly, through Knightsbridge, down the Brompton Road, and had finally got to nearly the end of the Cromwell Road, when he suddenly pulled up, and lifting the trap-door called down:

"Look 'ere, guv'nor, 'ow much farther is it you want me to go? Where *do* yer live?"

Beerbohm Tree had quite forgotten, but he was equal to

the occasion. With an air of stern severity he haughtily replied:

"Do you think I am going to tell a vulgar disgusting cabman like you where my beautiful home is?"

When Phil May died, there departed one of the finest black-and-white artists the world has seen, a true genius, as well as one of the gentlest and most unselfish of men.

Another pathetic figure comes to my mind. It is that of a broken-down gentleman who called himself Butcher, though that was not his real name. He earned his living by playing the violin in a theatrical orchestra, for which he received two pounds a week, an income which he supplemented by giving private lessons. He had been adopted as a young man by a wealthy bachelor relative, who brought him up in every luxury. He had been a friend of Sir Henry de Bathe's and the Duke of Beaufort's, and had led a jolly careless life of pleasure. Later he married a charming woman, was very happy, had a family of fine children to whom he was devoted, and then suddenly his relative died without warning, and instead of making him his sole heir, as he had promised, left him nothing. Fortunately Butcher was fond of music, had been a member of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society, and played the violin sufficiently well to be able to earn his living by it. His wife started a boarding-house. I said he was a pathetic figure, but only to those who knew his history; to all outward appearances he was a quiet contented pleasant man, with a fund of stories and with that indefinable distinction of manners of the man who is at perfect ease in every kind of society, and who had seen life. Here is a specimen of his stories.

A four-wheeler stopped in front of a public-house. The driver got down and seeing a little bit of a street urchin of very tender years, asked him to mind his horse while he went in to get a drink. The animal thus described was a decrepit old nag, all skin and bones, woe-begone and ancient. The driver, having

settled things to his satisfaction, entered the public-house. Presently the tiny mite of a street urchin came running in crying in a weak childish voice:

"I say, guv'nor! Come out at oncst! Your 'oss is fallen down dead!"

The driver took a final swig at his beer, and rushed out after the boy to see what had happened. Sure enough, there, stretched out on the pavement, lay the lifeless form of his poor, patient, long-suffering beast. There could be no doubt about it, he was as dead as a door-nail. The driver was beside himself; turning fiercely in his rage on the tiny little whipper-snapper of a gutter-snipe, he shouted:

"Look 'ere! What 'ave you been a-doing of to my 'oss?"

Penley, in spite of his very domestic and bourgeois habits, was nevertheless an habitué of the Savage Club, his droll face and sepulchral tones investing everything he did and said with an atmosphere of comedy. He had a fine bass voice, and told me that he used to sing in the Chapel of the Russian Embassy. As is well known, the bass plays an important rôle in the Orthodox Greek Church service. It was the Duchess of Edinburgh, however, daughter of Alexander II. of Russia, who put an end to his career as an Orthodox chorister. He told me about this incident in his life with great bitterness.

"The silly woman!" he said. "She went and complained to the Russian priest about my face, and begged him to dismiss me, because she said I interfered with her devotions. She said she could not help looking at me, and that my face made her laugh. Silly woman!"

To hear him relate this in his inimitable voice convulsed me. But while it was very ridiculous, it was also pathetic. Penley's face alone was provocative of laughter, and his performance of *The Private Secretary*, with that woe-begone hopelessly foolish-looking face of his, was the most mirth-compelling entertainment I have ever seen. I once took a boy of about nineteen, fresh

from the country, to see him, and his ungovernable laughter amused the audience quite as much as Penley's acting.

Years after I first met him he came up to me one day in the Savage Club smoking-room, and said in his solemn, impressive way:

"My boy, I have seen it. I am going to buy it and do nothing else for the rest of my life."

"What is that?" I asked.

"*Charley's Aunt*, my boy, a play by Brandon Thomas. Of course it is a sentimental play at present. But I can see myself in it. I shall make it funny and play nothing else."

Some time afterwards Penley used to lunch every day at the club with Neville Doone, a very humorous young actor, of whom more anon, and they had MSS. with them, and would spend the afternoon confabulating over these MSS. together.

Many years later a Miss Sheridan brought an action against Penley and Brandon Thomas, who had quarrelled by the way, for the recovery of several thousand pounds due to her as commission for introducing the two actors to a financier who had supplied the money for producing *Charley's Aunt*. In the course of the legal proceedings it came out in evidence that both Penley and Brandon Thomas had been receiving enormous sums as their share of the profits. Needless to say that Miss Sheridan won her case, receiving something like £3000.

Meeting Neville Doone a few days later, I asked him what he thought about the action, as he had been in the original cast of the play.

"It's a funny thing, isn't it? There's Miss Sheridan gets £3000, Penley and Brandon Thomas have both made fortunes, and I got £25 for putting the fun into Brandon Thomas's play. Of course I have no cause for complaint. Penley paid me what I asked for, and there's an end to the matter!"

The success of *Charley's Aunt*, whilst it drove poor Penley mad (he ended his days in a lunatic asylum), completely turned

Brandon Thomas's head. When he was a poor struggling actor he was a charming and sympathetic personality, but after the production of *Charley's Aunt* he began to take himself too seriously. At a supper party his wife's brother (Mrs. Brandon Thomas is a very charming woman), calling across the table, asked a friend whether he had heard the latest news. "You know," he said, "the German Emperor has gone mad, he has megalomania and thinks he is Brandon Thomas!"

Neville Doone was a remarkable man, whose romantic career deserves a few words of notice. His father was named Bullock, and ran a paper connected with farming. Dying suddenly, Bullock left a widow in somewhat straitened circumstances, with a son and two daughters to provide for. The boy, who was a pretty, blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked, golden-haired cherub, happened one day to save a lap-dog from being driven over, by boldly rushing into the roadway and snatching it almost from the very horse's hoofs. The lap-dog belonged to a lady who was wringing her hands and crying wildly. She was the wife of a wealthy solicitor, and had everything that money could buy, but no children. Profuse in her gratitude to the little hero who had saved her dog from the jaws of death, and who was, moreover, such a very attractive child, she determined to adopt him. The mother, though loth to part with her ewe lamb, felt she had no right selfishly to stand in his way, and finally acquiesced. But the sentimental wife of the wealthy solicitor was very naturally disgusted with the vulgar and prosaic name of Bullock. Just then *Lorna Doone* was a favourite novel, so he was called Doone, and as Lorna was a girl's name, Neville was substituted for it. Poor Neville Doone was brought up in the lap of luxury, absolutely spoilt and humoured in every whim. He was too lazy to qualify for any profession, but took to the stage, and played minor parts. His adoptive parents always provided him with sufficient money, and so he had no incentive to work. A very brilliant conversationalist, with a *bon naturel*, he virtually

wasted his life, and died from the effects of an operation at a comparatively early age.

Mark Twain was also a member of the Savage Club, but only rarely came amongst us because he always was so full of engagements when he visited this country. However I have a vivid recollection of one Savage Club Saturday night, when, in violation of an unwritten law of the club, Mark Twain made a speech. It was an American night, and Chauncey Depew had been expected, but did not turn up. Mark Twain, referring to his absence, said how much he regretted it, for Chauncey Depew was always entertaining to listen to, although he had the bad habit of generally selecting a member of the assembled company to be his butt with whom he used to wipe the floor. On one occasion, however, Mark Twain told us, he met his match. He had made a speech in which as usual he had fastened on one of the guests to make fun of him. When he sat down it was the turn of the man who had been held up to ridicule to propose the health of the last speaker. He said he was glad of this opportunity of toasting Mr. Chauncey Depew, for Mr. Chauncey Depew was an exemplar of the democratic institootions of the great republic of the United States in which it was possible for a man, provided he had ability to rise from the humble trade of a shoeblack (Mr. Chauncey Depew was reported to have started his career from that station in life), to rise even to the proud position of President of the Great Central Railroad Company. But Mr. Chauncey Depew, even when he had climbed to that giddy height, did not abandon his democratic principles, for, although, when he assumed the Presidency of that great railroad company, its shares were only accessible to millionaires, after he had administered that company for no more than twelve months he had brought them within the reach of the lowliest shoeblack.

It is impossible in cold print to reproduce the quaint solemnity with which Mark Twain delivered his speech, nor have I

attempted to give all the delicious little embroideries with which he ornamented it.

In talking of my Bohemian days I have, I am afraid, dwelt at too great length on the Savage Club. After all, that club was only one of the numerous territories of that unconventional Kingdom. It was very much the fashion to be "Bohemian" towards the end of the last century, and there were many phases and kinds of Bohemianism in vogue then. Some so-called Bohemians were immaculately dressed, and to be met with at the best hotels, others were poor and even penniless, but they were all animated by *joie de vivre*, and were mostly happy-go-lucky and improvident.

Of course there were Bohemian ladies as well as men, and amongst these one of the most popular was Mrs. Stannard, who wrote under the *nom de guerre* of John Strange Winter. She started a periodical called *Winter's Weekly*, which unhappily but very appropriately ended in a frost.

Talking of periodicals reminds me of a story told me by John Cross, who had been secretary to the Fabian Society, and was supposed to be a great authority on newspaper production. So much was his opinion valued that Henry Labouchere consulted him with regard to the publication of his new paper *Truth*. Cross approved of the idea and plan, but objected to the very ambitious title.

"My dear fellow," said Labouchere, "you don't see my point. It will get the paper talked about. People will say every Thursday morning, 'I wonder what lies that scoundrel Labouchere has put into his *Truth* this week!'"

Among the Bohemian hostesses of that time there was a German lady who had been a professional singer and had married a wealthy City man. At her house one met all the leading musical celebrities of the day, as well as several eminent painters; here Phil Morris rubbed shoulders with Vicat Cole, and Mme. Calvé, Signor Denza and many others fraternally

talked "shop." The hostess looked like an animated statue of Germania, she was colossal but perfectly proportioned. On her return from Harrogate one autumn I heard her say to a lady:

"I have got much tinner since my cure," adding, with a majestic sweep of her arm: "Take a valk round and look."

At a first night "Madge" of *Truth* asked her how her dress should be described.

"Empire in front and revolution behind," was the startling reply.

Alas! She is dead, like nearly all the people mentioned in this too lengthy chapter.

CHAPTER IX

ST. PETERSBURG UNDER ALEXANDER III

I WAS sitting in the Library of the Savage Club, which overlooks the Thames, and was writing the Christmas Number of a society paper called *Life*,[1] one December afternoon in 1889, when I received by special messenger an invitation to call at the offices of the *Graphic* at my earliest convenience. The *Graphic* was contemplating the publication of an illustrated newspaper to be called *The Daily Graphic* and, to make a long story short, I was offered and accepted the post of resident correspondent in St. Petersburg. It was ten years since I left Russia, and though I had kept in touch with my friends there, I was naturally delighted at the prospect of revisiting the country. But the Russia I returned to was a very different place from the Russia of 1879. Under the benignant rule of Alexander II. that country had blossomed out in a wonderful manner. Literature and the arts had made enormous strides, especially in Moscow, which being further from the court was less affected by the various intrigues and conflicts at the seat of government. There was an atmosphere of culture and refinement in that more ancient capital. Here lived Tchaikovsky and Tolstoy, here the brothers Tretiakoff patronised the arts, here could be felt the pulse of Russian life, the commercial prosperity and industrial growth of the empire. St. Petersburg, on the other hand, was a more brilliant place. There the streets were gay with handsome equipages. The court contributed its splendour. There were always great goings on, balls, reviews, gala performances. It was a perpetual panorama of

[1] The end of life is death, and the journal in question has justified its title.

brilliant uniforms, beautiful ladies and general gaiety. Now all this had changed. It was as though a pall had been cast over the town. One felt at once that Russia had been plunged back into the Middle Ages. To me, who had been away so long, and had not therefore witnessed the gradual transformation, step by step, the change was all the more striking. What was also noticeable was the extent to which German methods and manufactures had ousted those of France and England, which had previously prevailed. This was all the more noteworthy seeing that Alexander III. and his Danish consort both cordially detested everything German. Alexander III. wanted to make Russia Russian, and tried hard to act up to his watchword of Russia for the Russians, but failed in this, as he did in most things. Thus, shortly after his accession, the chief astronomer died, and it was proposed to promote his assistant to succeed him, but the Emperor would not hear of such a course because the unfortunate assistant was of German origin and had a German name. He insisted on having a Russian astronomer, but no Russian astronomer with a Russian name could be found, and so Alexander III. appointed a Russian General as chief astronomer, and retained the German assistant to do the work. This story was typical of the state of the country. On the surface everything was even aggressively Russian, but if you scratched that surface you more often than not found German material underneath. One of the first "reforms" undertaken by Alexander III. was to change the uniform of the army. Just as Nicholas I. had shown his Prussian leanings by copying the Prussian helmet and dress, and Alexander II. had betrayed his more cultured taste by introducing the French *képi*, so Alexander III. proclaimed his nationalism by designing a purely Russian uniform. He copied the peasants' fur cap for a headdress, made his officers wear scimitars instead of swords, and generally gave an Oriental appearance to his troops, abolishing all picturesque features, such as hussars, Uhlans, etc. The

Russian cavalry was divided into Cossacks and dragoons, and the uniform of the latter, as well as that of the artillery, differed but little from the dress of the infantryman. Thus a monotonous uniformity succeeded the variegated brightness of former reigns.

This was significant, indeed it was the keynote to the reforms of Alexander III.; in every direction and by all suitable means he tried to develop the national characteristics of his country, but always in a spirit of strict sobriety and economy. Economy was his great hobby. A friend of mine who was a *persona grata* at court told me to what length the Emperor would carry his parsimoniousness. It was pointed out to him, for instance, that the furniture in the living rooms in his lugubriously squalid palace of Gatchina needed re-covering, and his attention was drawn in particular to the silk on the sofa on which he was sitting. He spread his hand over the seat to examine it, and being rather a clumsy giant, he accidently made a big rent in it.

"I see," he said, "it is rather worn, but it has lasted so long, it will last a little longer."

The Empress was far less frugally minded than the Emperor, and, like her sister, Queen Alexandra, was very smart. It was reported that her somewhat extravagant tastes often brought her into sharp conflict with her Imperial spouse. If it had not been for the Empress there would have been but little brightness at court, but fortunately she was fond of dancing and insisted on the state-balls being held as of yore.

The Emperor was not only parsimonious, he was also lethargic. As a young man he had been an athlete, and, being phenomenally powerful, had performed great feats of strength. It was said of him that he could crush a horse-shoe in his hand, and roll up a silver rouble into a tube. His hatred of Prince Alexander of Battenberg (Prince of Bulgaria), was said to have had its origin in a wrestling match in which the tactless German is reported to have thrown the gigantic Russian, who always insisted that he was defeated by a foul and that Prince Alexander

had used unfair methods. Who shall decide where princes disagree? As a Grand-Duke, Alexander III. is also reported to have led a rather rackety life, and to have burnt the candle at both ends, which may account for his kidney trouble. Of late years, however, he had become thoroughly domesticated and *rangé*. He hated all forms of entertainment, and loved a quiet family life. He also developed a phenomenal somnolence, and would often be discovered fast asleep over important state papers. He was called the hibernating Emperor.

Under Alexander III. Russia rapidly developed into a police state. The peasants, who had been emancipated, and had their disputes settled and their difficulties arranged by unpaid justices of the peace, saw the abolition of these magistrates, and were placed under the tutelage of paid officials, something like the Indian Commissioners. They were generally less independent than before, especially as the village elder could inflict corporal punishment.

In St. Petersburg the police reigned supreme, under the ægis of General Groesser, an austere martinet. No parties could be given in private houses without his consent, and all the house-porters were what we should call special constables, and spied on the movements of the tenants. People spoke French amongst themselves in self-defence, so that their servants could not understand them and report their conversation to the police. The University students, who had hitherto gone about in plain clothes and lived free and joyous lives, were put into uniform and subjected to a sort of military discipline. Times had changed indeed. The streets were sombre, people went about as little as possible so as not to run the risk of being taken into custody by the ubiquitous police.

One day I had bought some "double-elephant" on which to make rough sketches for my paper. I carried this in a large cylindrical roll under my arm on my way home. As I was about to cross the street I observed a sledge coming round the corner,

in which was seated a sallow emaciated-looking young officer, with a shy and apprehensive expression of countenance. It was the Heir-Apparent. I quickly stepped back and took off my fur-cap to salute him. At the sight of my cylindrical roll, and the rapid movement of my arm, the Grand-Duke gave a scarcely perceptible shiver whilst he stolidly returned my salute. At the same time I saw policemen from all directions hurriedly rushing up. But as I had shown no sign of any intention to assassinate the young man, who lived to ascend the throne as Nicholas II., I was allowed to proceed on my way unmolested.

At that time the Grand-Duke Nicholas, Caesarevitch, was generally reported to be not quite normal. The Turkish Military Attaché told me that his nerves were all wrong, and that, when in conversation with him in his own study, the young Prince, without rhyme or reason, would suddenly pick up a match-box or any other handy article and throw it across the room. There is a legend that when he was a boy his abnormality gave his parents much anxiety and that a German nerve specialist was sent for to examine him. After the specialist had spent some time with the little Grand-Duke, and carefully overhauled him, the father interviewed the German *Gelehrter*, and asked him what he thought was the matter with the child.

The eminent authority was a man of science pure and simple, and no respecter of persons. He had been so absorbed in his examination that he had not given his mind time to consider who the patient was, or to devote sufficient attention to the exalted position of the father. Taken unawares, and full of his medical data, he is said to have thoughtlessly replied that he found he had before him a most interesting and baffling case of congenital idiocy; for which indiscretion he was rewarded by a box on the ear which sent him flying out of the room!

Though in popular belief the Heir Apparent was not "all there," my friend, Professor Kapoustine, who read him lectures on international law, assured me that he was an "oomnitza,"

Russian for wise person, and a most promising pupil. He was also stated to be very genial, devoted to private theatricals, in which he was fond of playing the villain. He certainly seems to have been an amiable and well-meaning young man, but, allowing for exaggeration, I think there was some foundation for the stories of his weakness of intellect. His conduct on the throne was hardly of a kind that was calculated to refute them. He certainly seemed to lack decision of character and consistency of purpose. For such a man, however well-intentioned, to become an autocrat is little short of a national disaster. In later years he developed a suspiciousness of his entourage which prevented him from trusting anybody, and contributed to his indecision. Like so many persons of weak character, he was profoundly obstinate, but hated conflict and argument, and thus would appear to have been convinced by the representations made, when as a matter of fact he remained of the same opinion, even though, for the sake of peace and quietness, he might on occasion actually give effect to recommendations which in his heart he did not approve. He was, moreover, very superstitious, had a firm belief in his own evil destiny, and was besides under the influence of spiritualists whose revelations he accepted as gospel truth.

The brothers of Alexander III. had none of his virtues, though some of them had more brains. Alexander III. was not his father's eldest son, and in his early days took but little interest in public affairs, and showed no signs of intellectual ability. In other words he was a dunce, and remained an ignoramus to the end of his days. When the château of Laeken, the Versailles of Belgium, was burnt down, he actually expressed his condolence to the Netherlands Minister, who was so covered with confusion that he did not know what to say. Through the death of his eldest brother, Nicholas, this uneducated giant, who had already reached man's estate, suddenly became Heir-Apparent, too late to repair the negligences of his youth. He

had at least common sense and a gift of recognising ability in others, and an unerring instinct in selecting suitable subordinates. Moreover he was a proud man, and never stooped to jealousy, like his eldest son, who could not abide clever people.

Alexander III.'s next brother, Vladimir, was believed to be the cleverest member of the Imperial family, and most like his father, but his natural ability had suffered by self-indulgence, he had the reputation of being a *viveur*, and was credited with being intemperate. When his father told him that he intended to arrange a marriage for him with a Princess of Mecklenburg he is reported to have replied:

"Poor girl!"

"Why do you pity your future wife?" his father sternly asked.

"What sort of a husband shall I make?" he is said to have replied. "I get drunk every night and cure my headache next morning with a hair of the dog that bit me."

While I was in St. Petersburg there was a scandal about Vladimir, which was kept as quiet as possible, but which came to my knowledge in so interesting a manner that I feel compelled to relate it.

In London I had made the acquaintance at William Morris's house of Stepniak, the famous Russian Nihilist, who was reputed to have murdered General Mezentzev, the Chief of the Russian Gendarmerie. It will be remembered that Mezentzev was shot in the street by a man who, after firing his revolver, jumped into a sledge to which was harnessed a white horse, and escaped. After a fruitless search, the police caused all the points of egress from St. Petersburg to be watched for a sledge drawn by a white horse, only to learn that a sledge with a white horse had been observed to leave each of the gates of the capital. No trace of the murderer could be found, but shortly afterwards there appeared in Switzerland a new arrival from Russia, who called himself Stepniak, and subsequently settled in London,

where many years afterwards he was run over by a train at a level crossing near Turnham Green and died.

On my appointment to St. Petersburg I informed Stepniak that I was going to Russia and told him I should like to be put in touch with his friends there in order to be made the mouthpiece of any news they might have. It was perhaps a risky thing to do, but a newspaper correspondent must be prepared to run risks in the interests of his paper.

I had not been long in St. Petersburg when I received a mysterious note delivered by hand. It ran as follows:

> Come to the Imperial Geographical Society's rooms next Tuesday to the lecture, you will there meet somebody who wishes to see you. Destroy this note as soon as you receive it.

Very much intrigued I went to the lecture at the Imperial Geographical Society, and on entering the hall I was met by a tall ascetic-looking young man who asked me my name.

"I am Kleber," he said, "lecturer on astronomy at the University. Mutual friends in England have asked me to keep in touch with you. Could you come and see me to-morrow afternoon?" He gave me his address and begged me not to drive straight up to his residence, but to dismiss my cab at some other point, walk through a certain courtyard, and to be careful I was not watched or followed.

"Now," he said in a low tone, "we must not be seen talking too long together."

The next day I followed his instructions, and reached his abode without incident. He received me in his little study, outside of the window of which I noticed a bell which was attached to a line of string.

"What is that bell for?" I asked.

"We have several friends living in different parts of this huge building, if any of them is visited by the police he signals to the others, and that gives us time to burn our papers."

At that moment the bell outside began to ring, and I felt an involuntary shiver run through me. I was just about to make a prudent and rapid retreat, when he said:

"Don't go yet. Wait a minute."

He opened the little window-pane, the *fortitchka*, which is the only means of ventilation in the winter, put his hand out, and withdrew a piece of paper from the string to which the bell was attached. It was a note from a friend in another part of the building, asking whether it would be safe for the writer to come round and see Kleber, and whether all was "clear."

It struck me as an uncanny and disagreeable atmosphere to live in.

From this M. Kleber, a most cultured and charming person, I received at odd times most interesting items of news which always, on verification in London, turned out to be correct.

From him I learned the following incredible story.

As everybody knows, the Emperor Alexander II. was assassinated in March, 1881. On the spot where he was murdered it was decided to erect a chapel, and the whole of Russia was invited to subscribe. A commission of architects was appointed to draw up the plans for the proposed chapel, and the Grand-Duke Vladimir, in his capacity of President of the Academy of Arts, was appointed chairman. To inspire confidence subscriptions were to be sent to him, and the fund obtained was to be administered under the Grand-Duke's supervision, by the Secretary to the Commission.

This Secretary found it necessary, for professional reasons, to visit the Great Exposition of Paris in 1889, and there, by his imprudently extravagant style of living, attracted the attention of the Russian secret police, who used to exercise an unobtrusive vigilance over the subjects of the Tsar visiting Paris. A report was sent to St. Petersburg, and it then suddenly dawned upon the authorities that a good many years had elapsed since the murder of Alexander II., that money had been pouring in,

but that so far only the foundations of the chapel had been laid and that the Grand-Duke Vladimir had given no account of his stewardship. He was thereupon invited by the Minister of Culture and Education to send in his accounts and furnish a statement of the moneys received. The Grand-Duke replied that he had entrusted the entire business to the Secretary of the Commission. The Secretary was, thereupon, requested to supply the necessary information, but refused point-blank, giving as his reason that he did not consider himself accountable to the Minister, to whom he even refused access to his books. The matter was reported to the Emperor, who immediately appointed a Committee of the three richest nobles of Russia, with Prince Vorontzoff-Dashkoff as President. This committee sealed up all the books and papers of the Commission, and fetched them away. They were subjected to a very careful audit, and it was ascertained that the Secretary had pocketed some three millions of roubles, part of which had been expended in the erection of a splendid block of flats.

Alexander III., who, though he might be stupid, was at least an honest and upright man, flew into a towering rage with his brother, but as he considered himself under a great obligation to him for the way in which he had taken charge and managed matters on the occasion of his accession, and as he hated a scandal, and moreover, as it was generally held that there was no direct evidence against the Grand-Duke, the whole affair was hushed up. I felt it my duty to supply my paper with the story, but respectfully begged them to refrain from publishing it, unless it was likely to become public property, and in any case to endeavour to verify it.

The story of the flogging to death in a Siberian convict prison of a female political prisoner, a young lady of education and refinement, which I also received from M. Kleber, reached my paper simultaneously from me and from another source.

The second brother of Alexander III. was the Grand-Duke

Alexis, Lord High Admiral of the Russian Fleet. He was unmarried, and spent as much of his time as he could in Paris and the South of France, in company with the beautiful Grand-Duchess of Leuchtenburg, who was a sister of the famous General Skobeleff.

The Leuchtenburg scandal fluttered the dove-cots of St. Petersburg not a little. The Duke of Leuchtenburg, who was a descendant of Eugène de Beauharnais, was a very slack sort of husband, and rather neglected his wife for his club, where he was a heavy gambler. Coming home late one evening he found his wife's bedroom door locked against him. He proceeded to thump pretty heavily, when the door was suddenly opened, and there appeared the Herculean form of the Grand-Duke Alexis, who proceeded to kick the astounded Leuchtenburg down his own stairs. The latter spent that night in his study and proceeded next morning to the Emperor to complain of the indignity offered him, but Alexander III. refused to interfere, as he had a great contempt for men who could not manage their own wives.

Volumes could be filled with scandals about the Grand-Dukes,[1] but after all that sort of thing is rather monotonous reading. It is more satisfactory to be able to say something in praise of at least one of them. The Grand-Duke Constantine Constantinovitch, grandson of Nicholas I., and son of that Grand-Duke Constantine of whom it was said that he had the Russian fleet in his pocket, was one of the few reputable Grand-Dukes of the time. He was a musician of some talent, and also a poet and had translated several of Shakespeare's plays into Russian. In his capacity of President of the Academy of Sciences he took an intelligent interest in what was going on in that domain, and he was also regarded as a patron of the arts and literature.

I had the honour of being presented to him one evening at

[1] I have recited several in my *Court of Russia in the Nineteenth Century*. 2 vols. (Methuen).

the house of Professor Grot, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences. Professor Grot and his wife were a charming old pair, one of whose sons was an historian and also a professor. On certain evenings this regular Darby and Joan couple used to receive their friends and gather them round their dining-table on which majestically simmered an imposing *samovar*; the entertainment was simple, but the company was always most interesting. One evening, when I was in this agreeable society, I found myself seated next to a Mr. Ordin, who became famous by publishing a pamphlet entitled *The Conquest of Finland*, which was the first shot, so to speak, in that conflict between Russia and Finland, which at one time threatened to develop into a serious conflagration. Mr. Ordin explained to me how the trouble began. He had bought himself a small estate in Finland, and had proceeded to settle down there, when to his great surprise he found himself boycotted for no other reason than that he was a Russian. Seeing that Finland was united to the Russian Empire in the person of her Grand-Duke, who was also the Emperor, Mr. Ordin resented this attitude, but the Finns persisted in it, and made life amongst them impossible for him. Further they promulgated a law prohibiting any but Finns from owning property in Finland. Mr. Ordin thought this was too strong, and started his campaign for the "conquest of Finland."

As he was explaining his grievances and developing his views the servant announced: "Constantine Constantinovitch," and there entered a very tall and extremely handsome young man with a thin and elegant figure, which was well shown off by his neat semi-Asiatic uniform of Colonel of the Ismailoff Regiment of Foot-Guards. Like all the Imperial family he wore his beard trimmed in Byzantine fashion, he was very fair and had large expressive but gentle smiling blue eyes. He was unattended. We all rose, he was placed next to Mme. Grot, and we all resumed our seats, all but one unfortunate young man, a

grandson of the house, who was a volunteer private in the Grand-Duke's Regiment, and could not, according to Russian military discipline, be seated in the presence of an officer without that officer's permission. The situation was, no doubt, novel to the Grand-Duke, who probably was not in the habit of meeting volunteer privates at the houses he frequented, at any rate he took no notice of his host's grandson, who stood immovable at attention until the Grand-Duke was seated, when he quietly and modestly withdrew.

"Who is that young man?" I heard the Grand-Duke ask.

"That is my grandson," the venerable professor replied.

"Why did he leave the room? Oh! yes! of course, he is my subordinate," he said, with an engaging smile, "do let him come back."

The young man was instantly fetched back, and the Grand-Duke insisted on his being presented to him and was most affable and unmilitary in his exchange of a few words.

As soon as that incident was settled, the conversation was continued by the various visitors at the respective points at which it was broken off, and nobody paid any attention or listened to the Grand-Duke. He seemed to know most of the people present, and occasionally the conversation became general, but no particular deference was shown him, and he was never addressed by title or in any distinctive fashion. When he rose to go he shook hands with the individual members of the party, including myself, who had been formally presented to him by Professor Grot. He was so good as to compliment me on my Russian and I explained to him that I had been educated at Moscow, whereat he expressed great interest.

It is sad to think that this amiable and cultured gentleman was grossly insulted at the outbreak of the war when he, like the Empress mother, was caught unawares while taking a cure at Wildungen. He died a natural death, however.

One of the first persons I called on, on my arrival at St.

Petersburg, was our ambassador, Sir Robert Morier, who was *persona grata* with the Emperor, and enjoyed the reputation of being one of the greatest diplomatists in the British Service. I had an official letter of introduction to him from the editor, and another from a private friend. Sir Robert received me with characteristic brusqueness.

"You have a very rude and impertinent editor," he said to me.

I replied that while I did not consider that editors as a race were distinguished for their courtesy, I was not aware that my editor was ruder than most.

"Well, I had occasion to go to see the *Graphic* some time ago, and I was told to go up a steep dark flight of stairs to the editor. When I got to his room he looked at me and asked very crossly who I was. He was a much younger man than I, so I think he ought to have shown me some courtesy. I told him my name, and he glared at me, and asked me what I wanted, so I told him I was Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg, and he said: 'Oh! the devil you are. Well, what do you want? I'm very busy!' Damned rude he was to me. A most objectionable person."

I explained to him that the *Daily Graphic* had a totally different editor from the *Graphic*, and that he was quite a Chesterfield by comparison. Sir Robert grew gradually somewhat mollified. I then asked him for an official introduction to General Groesser, the chief of police, who was the real ruler of St. Petersburg, but to this he demurred, saying that he would see what facilities were usually afforded to correspondents. My old friend, Mme. de Novikoff, happened to be in the capital, and so, on leaving Sir Robert, I at once went to call on her and told her how ungraciously he had received me. I informed her, in the strictest confidence, begging her most earnestly not to let it go any farther, that I intended on the first opportunity to open a campaign against him. She was greatly distressed, imploring me to abandon that idea as Sir Robert was such

a *persona grata* with the Emperor, and had done so much for the promotion of good relations between England and Russia. I remained adamant, however, and I could see that Mme. de Novikoff was very much disturbed. She quite agreed that I should make myself known to General Groesser, and promised to get me a letter of introduction from her brother, General Kireyev, Vice-President of the Slavonic Society, and personal aide-de-camp to the aged Grand-Duke Constantine Nicholaevitch, the Emperor's eldest uncle.

A few days later the letter duly arrived, and at the same time, by a curious coincidence, I received a summons to attend the British Embassy immediately. I at once obeyed the command, and was received with great *empressement* by Sir Robert Morier's son, who was acting as his private secretary. This very agreeable young giant apologised profusely for the absence of his father, who had been suddenly sent for by M. de Giers, the Foreign Minister. The question of giving me a letter of introduction to General Groesser had been considered, and had been decided in my favour. After handing me this official document, Mr. Morier further informed me that he had been instructed to introduce me to the military attaché, Colonel Ivor Herbert, now Lord Treowen, who had *les meilleures rélations* in St. Petersburg society, and would introduce me to anybody I wanted to know. I was immediately taken into Colonel Herbert's room, and presented to that elegant and cultured guardsman. He took me off on a round of visits to several leading artists, whose collaboration for my paper I was anxious to secure, and then took me to lunch at the Hôtel de France, where there was an English table, frequented by the members of the Embassy, and more especially by John Baddeley, that prince of correspondents, who represented the *Standard*. My little artifice with Mme. de Novikoff had succeeded admirably. If I had told the Ambassador that unless he did what I wanted I would abuse him in my paper I would only have justified his attitude

towards me, but by making a confidante of Mme. de Novikoff I had attained my object without putting myself in a false position.

Colonel Herbert was a fine example of that splendid product of British civilisation and training, the British officer, and a most knowledgeable man. He told me how he, a Roman Catholic, was frequently called in to arbitrate and settle disputes in his own regiment, when he always insisted that if he was asked to interfere, he must act as the Pope, from whose decision there could be no appeal. Later he had a splendid field for the exercise of his remarkable tact in the difficult position of Adjutant-General to the Forces in Canada, a post which he filled with conspicuous success, although it was the graveyard of many a military reputation.

The Hôtel de France was in those days, though a small hotel, famous for its excellent *cuisine*, and its omnipotent porter, M. Joseph. M. Joseph could do things in St. Petersburg that nobody else could do, and I believe that it was thanks to the good understanding which Baddeley maintained with that benevolent despot, that he was able to get through his despatches, and that the *Standard* was so well served with news.

Armed with my two letters of introduction I presented myself at General Groesser's house at nine o'clock, the hour indicated to me. I was shown into a large room, the bare walls of which were lined with petitioners, who stood like soldiers on parade. A private secretary, who looked a cross between an admiral in full dress and a liveried footman, and whose portly person was covered with decorations, very civilly and rather apologetically requested me to take my stand along the wall with the rest of the motley crowd. There were common peasants and peasant women, there were officers in full uniform, there were nondescript people in dress-clothes and dirty shirt-fronts, there were opulent-looking merchants, who could probably afford to dress anyhow, and there were young ladies of various types

of beauty, and old ladies who could never have represented any type of beauty whatever. There we stood, awaiting our fate. To some of us, no doubt, the moments thus passed must have seemed a lifetime. Who knows what tremendous misfortunes had impelled these poor people to seek out the ruler of St. Petersburg?

At last he appeared, looking furious, booted and spurred, as though about to ride rough-shod over all the petitioners. But he did nothing of the kind. He took them all in turn, and I discovered that everybody had come armed with a petition, all of which Groesser collected. They were subsequently handed to clerks, and might as well have been sent by post, but the Oriental tendencies of the Russian mind are fascinated by this accessibility and show of personal administration of justice. An old woman and an old man fell on their knees and implored Groesser to grant them their petition. The General sternly bade them rise, and then kindly inquired into their wants. It is only fair to say that his demeanour to the lower classes was invariably kind and encouraging.

My turn at length arrived. Groesser took my letters and roughly asked me who I was. After I had explained my mission to him, he shouted:

"And what are you?"

"I am an Englishman," I replied.

"There are lots of you Englishmen over here, corresponding for your English papers, and they write nothing but lies about Russia."

I explained that at least as far as I was concerned it would be my endeavour to tell the truth. He turned on me and retorted:

"After you have been here some time you will lie like the rest," and with that parting shot he turned on his heel, left the room and banged the door. Evidently the General thought that the climate of St. Petersburg was not conducive to veracity.

General Groesser was a tall, spare energetic-looking man, with

small but keen eyes. He used to drive about the streets in an open carriage and pair, and his face was as well known as that of the Emperor, with whom he was a great favourite, and deservedly. Perhaps in England one would have preferred a little more of the *suaviter in modo* in a police official, but in Russia they had at that time got tired of Western manners.

On one occasion he came into conflict with some of the Grand-Dukes, for he was no respecter of persons. One evening at Cubat's Restaurant, while the Grand-Dukes Vladimir and Alexis, accompanied by the Grand-Duchess Marie, Vladimir's wife, and the Grand-Duchess of Leuchtenburg, were having supper in a private room, they heard loud laughing voices in the adjacent chamber and recognised the voice of Guitry, the French actor, amongst them. The Grand-Duchess Marie insisted on having Guitry brought in, and on learning that he was in the company of some French actresses, asked him to show her how he made love to these ladies. Guitry was at first confused, but on being encouraged, he became emboldened, and putting his arm round the Grand-Duchess's waist, had the temerity to attempt to kiss her, whereat the Grand-Duke Vladimir lost his temper, and hit him on the head with a chair. Guitry gave a loud cry, and his friends from next door rushed in to rescue him. A general *fracas* ensued and Cubat imprudently telephoned for Groesser, who arrived in a surprisingly short time, and by his mere presence instantly quelled the riot. The Grand-Dukes shamefacedly returned home, but Groesser reported the incident to the Emperor next morning, who severely reprimanded his brothers, but expelled both Guitry and Cubat. Cubat returned to Paris where he started a restaurant on the Champs-Élysées, in the house of the famous Mme. de Paiva, now the Travellers' Club. The restaurant did not pay, and after the death of Alexander III., a few years later, Cubat, through the influence of the Grand-Duke Vladimir, got reinstated, and reopened his old establishment in St. Petersburg.

I only know of one instance of Groesser's being scored off. He had suspended a circus clown named Durnov, for making uncomplimentary remarks about him in public. When the period of suspension was over Durnov appeared in the arena of the circus with two pigs, one larger than the other, and, pointing to the smaller pig, said, in German: "Dies ist ein grosses Schwein," and then, pointing to the larger one, added, "aber dies ist groesser."

To the credit of the General be it recorded that he ignored this punning audacity.

Needless to say I was indignant at the gratuitous insult this very efficient but extremely tactless police official had offered me, and told Mme. de Novikoff what I thought of him.

"You must not be surprised," she said, "there can be no doubt that your colleagues have been saying a lot of unpleasant things about Russia and even those who start with the best intentions end by being as bad as the others. Take Stead, for instance. I did all I could for him, and even got him an interview with the Emperor. And what do you think he did? The Emperor had accorded him an hour, and had said he could not give him more of his time, so when Stead was admitted he immediately took out his note-book and told the Emperor that as time was so short there was none to waste, perhaps he would permit him to proceed at once with the interview. The Emperor was completely taken off his feet, and surrendered himself to his interviewer, who placed his watch on the table, and as soon as the hour had expired, jumped up, thanked the Emperor for having received him, and precipitately left. The Emperor was so much amused that he went to the Empress and announced to her that he had just been dismissed. Of course that was only a solecism. But then Stead published his *Truth about Russia*, and insulted the Autocrat by calling M. Pobedonostzev the Black Tsar of Russia, when there is only one Tsar in Russia, the Emperor."

I was immensely tickled.

"Then," she continued, "so many of your papers are owned by Jews or are under Jewish influence, and they read us lectures for ill-treating them, but they don't know anything about our Jews. You in England have very decent well-behaved Jews, who are good citizens. But our Jews are parasites, they demoralise the people. I will tell you a true story which I have just heard, and then you will be able to judge of the dishonesty and evil influence of the Jews for yourself. Last summer there arrived in a village a couple of Jews to buy hay. The peasants showed them the hay.

"'How much hay have you got?' the Jews demanded.

"'You can see for yourselves, there are the stacks!'

"'That won't do,' said the Jews, "we must have the hay weighed. Have you any weighing-machines?'

"The poor peasants shook their heads. They had no weighing-machines. What was to be done? The Jews were ready with an idea. 'Of course,' they said, 'you have scales?' Yes, they had scales, so then the Jews proposed that the hay should be weighed pood (36 lbs.) by pood in the scales, and that after each pood had been weighed the Jews should put a twenty-copek silver coin into a cap to be placed on the ground, and that after all the hay had been weighed, the coin should be counted out and thus the number of poods ascertained. The plan was agreed to and next morning operations were commenced, but it proved a long process, and it was a very hot day, the sun was very trying and everybody was beginning to feel thirsty. The Jews kept mopping their heads; at last human nature could endure the heat no longer, so they said to the peasants:

"'Little Brothers, shall we adjourn to the Kabak (pot-house) and have a drink?'

"'Very good,' said the peasants, "but how about the money in the cap?'

"'Oh! that will be all right,' the Jews exclaimed. 'Haven't

you got a man you can trust amongst you, whom you can leave in charge of the money? And then when we have had a drink, then he can go and have one too.'

"It seemed a capital idea. So one poor old peasant was left in charge of the cap containing the money. It was very hot and the old man felt very much annoyed at being left all alone in the sun, while all the other peasants went off to have a drink. The cap was full of silver coins, and they looked at him and tempted him, and he thought that if he did take a few of those twenty-copek pieces out of the cap nobody would notice it. He therefore did so, and by the end of the day when the coins were counted, the Jews only paid for as many poods of hay as there were coins in the cap. So the poor honest peasants were cheated. That is how these dirty Jews get rich."

It did not seem to occur to Mme. de Novikoff that if the peasants had themselves been honest the trick would not have come off.

"But you English," she continued, "don't want to know the facts, all you want is sensational news. I had one of your colleagues here just before you came, and I asked why he always wrote lies about Russia. Do you know him?" and she mentioned the name of an underground international journalist. "He told me that he had to supply the papers with what they wanted. He said that he had offered his services to our Government, but that we had refused him, and now he must live by lies. And he told me that even you had been sending lies to your paper, and that you had sent a message to say that there was a rising in St. Petersburg, and that the Cossacks were riding up and down the Nevsky cutting down the people."

I assured Mme. Novikoff that I had never dispatched such a message. On my return to my rooms which I shared with a young Englishman resident in St. Petersburg, he told me that he had had a great surprise.

"X.," he said, mentioning the name of the international

journalist Mme. de Novikoff had referred to, "who has not been to see me for about a year, called while you were out."

"Oh!" I said, "I suppose he wanted to see the last issue of the *Daily Graphic*, and the number he wanted to see had not arrived?"

"You seem to have second-sight to-day."

Next day the *Daily Graphic*, containing the message referred to by Mme. de Novikoff, duly reached me, but it was from "a correspondent" not from "our own correspondent." I immediately drove off to Mme. de Novikoff and showed it her, explaining that the only person who could have known about that despatch the day before, seeing that the paper had not then arrived, was the man who had sent it. I am glad to know that the journalist in question was shortly afterwards expelled from Russia.

The duties of a newspaper correspondent are various. It is his business to reflect the life of the country he is stationed in, as well as its politics, and hence it becomes his duty to treat of art, literature and music.

My residence in St. Petersburg coincided with the meteoric appearance of a talented American singer, whose stepfather had selected for her the ridiculous *nom de guerre* of Nikita, a man's Christian name, which occurs frequently among the peasantry, its Greek equivalent being Nicetas. But these little "niceties" did not trouble the honest American guardian of the charming *prima donna*. She had had a romantic career, the Persian Minister Mirza Riza Khan had fallen violently in love with her, offered her marriage and pursued her without avail. At a grand performance of Rubinstein's *Building of the Tower of Babel*, which was well attended by the Imperial family, and at which there was a chorus of six hundred voices, Nikita had a great success. The Empress was so delighted with her, that she insisted on her being presented to her. The unconventional American girl, although she had been carefully coached by a

court official as to what she was to say and do, warmly grasped the hand which the Empress had held out for her to kiss, and exclaimed that she could not find words to express her pleasure at making her Imperial Majesty's acquaintance. The Empress was greatly amused, but Rubinstein was much annoyed. The incident is almost as good as that related of the American who on being presented to the Pope heartily shook His Holiness's outstretched hand and ejaculated: "Pleased to meet you sir, I had the pleasure of knowing your father, the late Pope."

Nikita took the air regularly every day, and used to wear a Russian fur and tried to look Russian as hard as she could. Her admirers used to watch for her appearance. She won the hearts of the Russians by learning to sing correctly in the original a number of Russian songs. Of her jewellery she was very proud, particularly of a diamond crescent and star, which had been given her by the Archduke Rudolph of Austria. The Baroness Viscera had a similar ornament in her hair when she was found dead.

To turn from music to literature; a Russian student was arrested whilst I was in St. Petersburg for being in possession of one of Herbert Spencer's works. Darwin's works were equally taboo.

One day when I came home to my rooms, I was informed that my father had been to see me. As my father was, to the best of my belief in London, I was greatly surprised, but on the following morning my "father" turned up. It was no other than my old friend Professor Storojenko who had come up from Moscow to try to persuade the Grand-Duke Constantine Constantinovitch to use his influence to get the prohibition to print and publish Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* removed, but the Grand-Duke could not see his way to do so, as he considered the book "immoral." As the book was already being widely read surreptitiously in MS. this seemed rather absurd.

My post was only a temporary one, for we were all appointed

as stop-gaps, without knowing it, until the *Daily Graphic* machinery was sufficiently perfected to enable the paper to go to press late enough to take Reuter's Service. We were all asked to remain at our several posts, however, and do space work, without salary, but as St. Petersburg was an expensive place to live in, this suggestion did not meet with my approval. Mr. Pemberton Grund of the *New York Herald* happened to arrive at that time, and appointed me the correspondent of that paper, but as I was not supplied with funds, and cabling was very expensive, and as I could get no reply from Mr. Gordon Bennett in response to my request to confirm the appointment, I decided to return to London.

CHAPTER X

BERLIN UNDER WILLIAM II

I HAD not been very long back in London before I was appointed Reuter's Special Correspondent in Berlin. The friend through whom I got the appointment warned me that I must not regard it as a permanent job. What had happened was that *The Times* was taking Dalziel's *Times* Special Service from a number of places in preference to Reuter's Service. Moberley Bell, the manager of *The Times*, who had been recommended for the post by my friend, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, explained to me later how this came about. Reuter's Service was more or less official in character. Reuter's exchanged news with the various semi-official news agencies on the Continent, such as the Agence Havas, the Agence Steffani, Wolff's Bureau, the Northern Agency, and the Agence Balkanique, thus covering the whole of Europe, but the news derived from these official sources was necessarily colourless, and sometimes even uninteresting. When Moberley Bell became manager of *The Times*, he sent for the manager of Reuter's, and told him that he wanted a better service, but Reuter's manager explained that this was impossible, whereupon Moberley Bell replied:

"Well, if you won't give us a better service I shall have to make you."

He then proceeded to look round, and hit upon Dalziel, who had just started the Dunlap Agency in New York, Dunlap, the fashionable hatter of that "Metropolitan City," supplying the capital. On the invitation of Moberley Bell, Dalziel came to London, and later founded an independent News Agency in Paris. To Berlin he sent a German American of the name of

Fischer who, having left his Vaterland in his early youth, had partly forgotten his native language, and had but imperfectly mastered American journalese. His news was more sensational than scientifically accurate, and his style was less literary than graphic. This gentleman's messages were certainly not wanting in colour, whatever else they might have lacked.

Reuter's now saw themselves in a difficulty. They felt they must do something in self-defence, and so they started their Special Service, and I was selected to compete against Mr. Fischer. My friend, Teddie Michael, who was then on the staff of Dalziel's and knew Fischer well, gave me a letter of introduction to that gentleman, as he strongly represented to me the importance of being on good terms with my friend, the enemy. This letter was of the greatest value to me, for, by getting to know Fischer, to whom I indirectly owed my post, and therefore had no grudge against, I was able to understand his psychology and methods, and learn what to imitate and what to avoid in them. Fischer had been trained in the traditions of American journalism and had been taught to attach importance to matters which had no bearing on the political or social life of the country. Thus, he once wrote a long "story" round a regrettable accident to some school children in East Prussia, who had been drowned while walking on the ice. It was a very sad affair, to which the German papers devoted small paragraphs in obscure corners of their issues, but of which he made a "stunt." It will not occasion any surprise therefore that after I had been a couple of months in Berlin *The Times* substituted Reuter's Special Service from that capital for Dalziel's.

Poor Fischer was himself compulsorily removed by the police shortly afterwards. He had made the acquaintance of the daughter of one of the porters of the Imperial Palace, an achievement of which he boasted to me with great pride. But, alas! this fruitful source of spicy, though not invariably authentic information, was the cause of his undoing. As everybody knows,

the old palace, the Schloss of Berlin, is supposed to be haunted, and there was a legend that whenever the monarch, or an important member of his family, was about to die the apparition of a White Lady appeared there. Of course rumours of the appearance of this uncanny messenger of death were constantly being put about, and as constantly hushed up. Unfortunately for Fischer, his friend at the portals of the palace heard such a rumour and communicated it to him. As discretion was entirely absent from his composition he unhesitatingly published the intelligence and was, in consequence, ignominiously expelled from Berlin for circulating malicious tales. I think he maintained his relations with the porter's daughter, for soon afterwards he published a highly sensational book purporting to be the memoirs of a lady at the German court.

My own position in Berlin was more than ordinarily difficult. Wolff's Bureau, to which I was accredited, resented my appointment, which they considered a reflection on their own efficiency, and the various resident correspondents of the English papers regarded me as an interloper, for it was my business to compete against them. For all that they treated me with great fairness and received me as a colleague. The *Standard* correspondent, Dr. Waldeck, who was a German and had many friends in the literary and artistic circles of Berlin, showed me particular kindness.

Berlin had completely changed since the 'sixties. Entirely new residential neighbourhoods consisting of blocks of well-appointed flats had sprung up in every direction. The streets, which had formerly been paved with cobble-stones, had been beautifully levelled and laid out with asphalte by an English company. The centre of the town had been transformed, splendid shops had been erected, and there was a general air of prosperity. Poverty was rapidly disappearing. But the people were not contented, for they disliked and feared their Kaiser, whom they distrusted as a weak and vain man who might

easily succumb to bad influences, and drive the country to disaster, a view, indeed, which events have fully justified. The people were growing more and more prosperous, more and more intent on the arts of peace, and the sabre-clanking swashbuckling militarism of the young Kaiser disquieted them. The demeanour of the officers in the streets had also changed, from being quiet, reserved and dignified, scornful of civilians, haughty and supercilious perhaps towards the "canaille," but imbued with self-respect and, generally speaking, tempering their pride with modesty, they now became "schneidig," truculent, swaggering, quarrelsome and over-bearing. Indeed so unpopular had the officers made themselves, that the young bloods of the guards never appeared in uniform in places of amusement of an evening, and even at smart restaurants often wore mufti, a practice totally opposed to the spirit of the German army, but winked at if not indeed enjoined by the commanding officers of crack regiments at that particular period.

The Kaiser, who had had the reputation of being very rackety in his early days, had apparently sobered down completely. There were no scandals about him then. But his high-handed dismissal of Bismarck, the greatest statesman Germany had ever had, was universally resented. The estimation in which the Emperor was held is well exemplified by the following story of a little gutter-snipe standing amongst the crowd in front of the palace waiting for the Kaiser to take his diurnal drive. At last, growing impatient, the street urchin exclaimed:

"If that pig-dog does not come soon, I shall go home."

He was overheard by a vigilant policeman, who seized him by the ear and sternly asked him whom he meant.

"Why! my brother, of course! Whom did you mean?"

The people used to say: "We have had three Kaisers: der Greise-Kaiser, der Weise-Kaiser und der Reise-Kaiser" (the hoary Kaiser, the sapient Kaiser and the travelling Kaiser).

The national anthem was altered from "Heil dir im Siegerkranz" to "Heil dir im Sonderzug" (Hail to thee in the special train).

One of the first functions I attended in Berlin was the opening of an International Exhibition of Painting which had been promoted by the Empress Frederick, herself no mean artist. In order to do his mother honour, and as a sort of act of official atonement, the Emperor performed this ceremony in state, attired in the full uniform of the Gardes du Corps, and escorted by a squadron of that regiment. Professor Anton von Wernher and the other distinguished artists, including the diminutive Menzel, were disgusted at this uncalled-for military display. They were peaceful artists, they said, not recruits. The Emperor had wished to do them honour, and did not know of any better way of demonstrating his respect for art, but he had no tact and invariably struck the wrong note, just as when he signed his name under the motto "Sic volo sic jubeo" in Munich, or proclaimed, in a constitutional country: "Regis voluntas suprema lex." These things had just been done when I came to Berlin, and they had made him intensely unpopular.

In spite of the Emperor's ambition to turn Berlin into the capital of Europe, the rallying point of all the rank, wealth and intellect of Germany, to make it supersede not only Vienna, but Paris, and in spite of the proud boast of its citizens: "Berlin ist Weltstadt geworden" (Berlin has become a world-town), it continued to be a fairly dull and depressing though comfortable and still cheap town to live in. Many factors had contributed to make Berlin dull. In the days of the old Emperor William I. wealth did not count and was not the passport to society which it has since universally become. Moreover, the great age of the Emperor had compelled him to lead a more or less secluded life. His son, the Crown Prince, was so hated and feared by Bismarck, that he was kept under constant observation, and it was sufficient to be known as a friend of the Crown Prince's to be in the black books of Germany's Major Domo. The great Chancellor had

many of the unlovable traits of his famous prototype, Cardinal Richelieu. He was jealous of others and surrounded himself with persons who were his own creatures and owed everything to him. This had a disastrous influence on the civil service, hitherto renowned for its impeccability. Like Richelieu, Bismarck hated the aristocracy. They were all under police observation. Everybody in Berlin, more or less, even so unimportant a person as myself, had a dossier kept about him at the headquarters of the secret police. The consequence was that the great families avoided the capital, and lived on their estates, some even abroad. Thus, Prince Henckel von Donnersmark preferred the more genial climate of Paris, and Prince Blücher von Wahlstadt purchased an island near Guernsey, where he took up his residence. It followed that there was very little entertaining among the great families in Berlin, seeing that they were mostly absentees. The wealthy commercial classes were mostly of the Jewish race, and knew that nothing they could do could open the doors of society with a big S to them, they therefore lived quietly and entertained but little, mostly on a small family scale. In the diplomatic world the doyen of the diplomatic circle was the venerable Count de Launay, whose wealthy and aristocratic wife was very infirm and aged, and spent the best part of her days confined to her bed. This virtually prohibited the de Launays from entertaining. The British Ambassador was Sir Edward Malet, a man of great energy and mental alertness, but an Englishman to the backbone, and rather shy and reserved, deficient in social gifts and not in touch with German life, his knowledge of the German language being very limited. His wife, Lady Ermyntrude, the daughter of the Duke of Bedford who committed suicide some years later for mysterious reasons, was even shyer than her husband, and positively hated society. The Embassy, like so many of our Embassies, was a British enclave in a foreign land, and lived to itself. Our young attachés and secretaries were

but little known outside the intimate family circle of the Embassy, and the Empress Frederick. So much was this the case that it was possible for a Berlin gutter-paper, very soon after my arrival, to publish a libellous paragraph concerning a young man who held the position of Embassy Secretary, and had been transferred to the Foreign Office, to the effect that he was obliged to leave on account of the heavy gambling debts which he had contracted and was unable to pay. I knew this amiable young diplomatist personally. He was a man of very limited means, for which reason he was compelled to lead a frugal and somewhat self-denying life, and never so much as touched cards or ventured on games of hazard. I showed the paragraph to the Embassy, who had not seen the sheet in which it was published, and who compelled the editor to print a full and abject apology. Thanks to this little incident, in which the Embassy were pleased to think that I had put them under an obligation, my relations with our mission, and especially with Sir Edward Malet, were of the most friendly, not to say cordial character.

At all the other Embassies, for one reason or another, there was the same absence of social life.

When, added to this, it is remembered that Bismarck's successor, General Caprivi, a thoroughly sound and broad-minded man, had publicly stated that it would be his endeavour to make politics dull (*langweilig*), I need not labour the point that Berlin was scarcely an inspiring post for a young journalist who had his spurs to win. Count Caprivi did not remain Chancellor for very long. His constitutional methods of government and obvious liberal bias did not suit the bureaucracy of which Holstein, the *Éminence grise* of Prince Bismarck, was the unofficial head, nor did it please the court camarilla led by that sinister person, Count Philip Eulenburg. He was succeeded by Hohenlohe, a dignified nobleman, whose great age prevented him from resisting with any degree of energy the machinations of Holstein or the camarilla. It was only many years later, when

the camarilla had got tired of Holstein and he was dismissed, that the scandals about Eulenburg were published by Max Harden, which caused the fall of the camarilla. During all these years the Emperor was like a child in the hands of the Eulenburg clique, who flattered and humoured him to an incredible extent. When I arrived in Berlin this clique was still in a more or less embryonic stage, but the Emperor had already revolted against the Waldersee domination. Count Waldersee, who was married to a very attractive and extremely pious American lady, had succeeded von Moltke, the nonagenarian field-marshal, as chief of the staff. The General Staff used to give an annual prize for the best essay on some strategical problem set by them. These essays had to be sent in anonymously, they were adjudicated on by the Chief of the Staff, and it was only afterwards that their authorship was ascertained. Unfortunately the Kaiser himself sent in such an essay which was mercilessly criticised by Waldersee, who was, in consequence, relieved of his post shortly afterwards, and appointed to the Altona command where he had the unpleasant duty of acting as a sort of watch-dog on Prince Bismarck who lived at the neighbouring Friedrichsruh.

When the young Kaiser ascended the throne, he was animated by the best humanitarian intentions which he had imbibed from his tutor, Hinzpeter. One of the causes of conflict between him and Bismarck was that the latter did not share the Emperor's very advanced views regarding the working-classes. But although the Emperor had the best intentions, these were vitiated by his extraordinary vanity and arrogance, and his somewhat Byzantine conception of his Imperial authority. He interfered in everything and made himself the laughing-stock of the capital. Thus he discovered a mediocrity called von Wildenbruch, whom he employed to write historical plays under his direction, which were mounted at considerable cost and rehearsed under his personal and active supervision, much to the amusement and

often to the annoyance of the actors and actresses. These plays, to the credit of the German press be it said, were severely handled by the critics, but had a spectacular success.

In the same way he sought out a sculptor, Begas by name, and commissioned him to adorn Berlin, also under his direction, with statuary. Malicious people said that Begas owed his favour to his beautiful wife, but I do not think there was any basis of fact for that gratuitous insinuation. Begas was certainly a fine artist, but his great merit lay in his pliability. He carried out his Imperial master's instructions without demur, and the Emperor had the illusion of being able to fancy that he could see the reflection of his own genius in this court-scupltor's work.

That the Emperor interfered in technical matters just as much, is, of course, well known. He designed battleships, equipped his cavalry with lances, introduced shock-tactics, and even a cure for consumption, which was a failure. Dr. Koch, the unfortunate bacteriologist of whom the Emperor wished to make a German rival to Pasteur, protested in vain that his researches were not as yet ripe for publication. But the impetuous Emperor was deaf to his entreaties, installed him in splendidly equipped laboratories, and invited the world to send their eminent scientists to Berlin to sip wisdom at the feet of this German genius; even Japan responded to the call. It was a great time. For something like eighteen months Berlin was the Mecca of the scientific world.

It was the same with industry, as Krupp's and the Hamburg-America Line could witness. Wherever he went, William II. took the lead and assumed the rôle of schoolmaster, to the disgust of his liege subjects, who are at least thorough, and loathe amateurishness.

After I had been in Berlin a few months, I received a letter from Reuter's informing me they had heard a socialist revolution was preparing in Germany, and asking me to send them an article for publication, giving my views of the political situation.

The idea of a revolution in Germany seemed ridiculous to me at the time, but I did not think that my own views would carry much weight, so I proposed to Reuter's to arrange a series of interviews with the German socialist leaders. They jumped at the suggestion, and I proceeded to look round. Among the leaders was a man called Andreas, who was running a socialist printing works. He was a typical German socialist, big and fat with a huge beard and a false air of honesty and bluntness. Really a double-dyed scoundrel. He received me in a bluff and truculent manner, and expressed the opinion that there could be no hope for Germany until bayonets were appealed to and the streets ran red with blood, of which there was little prospect, he thought, at the moment. The bourgeois system was too deeply rooted in the country. "Even I," he said, "cannot adopt an honest policy in my own works, but am compelled, against my wishes, to treat my workmen on the detestable bourgeois lines. Nothing can cure us but blood-letting."

From this ogre I turned to look up Herr Bebel. Herr Bebel was an intellectual man with wonderful grey hair and an equally remarkable beard. His chevelure looked as though it consisted of an infinite number of very small cork-screws, and he had bright beady black eyes, piercing like gimlets. This extraordinary man was courtesy itself, and spoke to me at great length on the situation and the impossibility of carrying out the full socialist programme all at once; he was for slow and gradual methods. My interview with him was reproduced in the German papers and caused a sensation. He was heckled on it at a public meeting, and denied its authenticity. Thereupon he was asked whether he denied having been interviewed at all, but he was sufficiently honest to admit that he had. He was then asked whether the statements ascribed to him were all a tissue of lies, or whether the interview was at least partially truthful. He again admitted that some of the statements published had correctly reproduced his views, and that in fact the interview

was a mixture of truth and lies. Now his hecklers thought they had got him, and they asked him to tell the meeting what was true and what was false in the interview. But this he absolutely declined to do, alleging that the true and the false had been so hopelessly and inextricably mixed up that it was impossible to disentangle them. Apart from the undeserved compliment he thus unwittingly paid me, he sealed his own doom. The result was a split in the socialist party.

Berlin was a difficult place for news, because, as I have already said, Caprivi, the Chancellor, had determined to make politics dull, yet it was necessary to send interesting stuff to feed the English papers. Reuter's suggested that I should get the run of a Berlin newspaper office, and they put me in touch with the sub-editor of the *National Zeitung*, who for one hundred marks a month undertook to supply me with tit-bits. But the *National Zeitung* was a steady-going old-fashioned concern, very much like what our defunct *Standard* used to be. While I was not disposed to scorn the aid of the sub-editor of that patriotic daily, I felt that I ought to have another string to my bow. Now there was then in the Reichstag a German counterpart to Mr. Henry Labouchere in the leader of the Freisinnige Partei or Radical Party, Herr Eugen Richter, who, like his English prototype also ran a paper, only a daily, the *Freisinnige Zeitung*. I therefore determined to endeavour to get the run of the office of that organ, and with this object called on Herr Eugen Richter. I was received by his private secretary, a typical virtuous-looking German, with a transparently and ruggedly honest countenance, blue eyes and a fair beard. He was about thirty and was quite the personification of incorruptibility. He explained to me with great courtesy that Mr. Richter never saw journalists, and had an objection to being interviewed, but he would put my proposal before him, though he did not think there was the slightest chance of its being accepted. In a few minutes he returned, and informed me that my idea was out of the question.

That same evening, while I was poring over the various late editions of the papers, a gentleman, whose name I did not know, was announced. It was my virtuous friend, the private secretary of Richter. He told me that he had come to see me unofficially and in his private capacity, and then proceeded to offer me his services. He was Mr. Richter's secretary, and the acting editor of the paper. Everything that came into the office went through his hands, moreover, he was the repository of his chief's confidences. All his sources of information this trusted confidential man was prepared to place at my disposal for a ridiculously small monthly fee, the sole condition being that I must never mention his name to third parties, nor communicate with him in any way. As far as the outside world was concerned I was not to know of his existence. On that understanding he would call on me every day on his way home, and tell me the things he had seen and heard, but on no account was I to reveal my source of information. I closed with him at once, and he proved a most valuable and trustworthy ally. My English colleagues used to wonder where I got my information from, and were green with envy.

I had another source of information, however, but that was of a very different character. A great friend of mine at the Belgian Legation in London had given me a letter of introduction to the Belgian Minister at Berlin, Baron Greindl, a distinguished and experienced diplomatist, with a vast fund of knowledge. This very kind old gentleman, on the strict understanding that I would never put his name in print or reproduce anything he told me in the shape of an interview, placed himself entirely at my disposal, and gave me many valuable sidelights on the various questions of the day. It was of the greatest advantage to me to be able to get the opinion of an absolutely impartial and unbiased, trained, diplomatic observer like Baron Greindl. His views on socialism were extremely interesting. He gave me illustrations from his own country to show that the moment

the working-classes became proprietors and have anything to lose they abandon the socialist party and turn conservative. The British Embassy usually obtained news from me, instead of giving me any, although Sir Edward Malet was particularly kind to me, always saw me, and was at great pains to explain the British point of view. On one occasion when I called, his servant came down with Sir Edward's apologies and regrets that he would be obliged to keep me waiting, but that he had just returned from Potsdam, where he had been caught in a shower and was therefore compelled to change his trousers!

With the German Foreign Office my relations were at first somewhat strained. I had received information, of the authenticity of which I was convinced, that certain negotiations were proceeding between Lord Salisbury and General Caprivi, which it was in the interest of the British public to publish. My statement was officially contradicted in the government gazette, the *Reichsanzeiger*, and a gentleman of the political police called on me and asked me to dispatch a telegram to Reuter's confessing that I had been misinformed. This I refused to do, and so there was a bit of a rumpus. The Foreign Office then asked me to publish a wild-cat story about Russian machinations in Central Asia, but to this I would not lend myself.

Once I rather scored off the German Foreign Office over a question of news. It had come to my knowledge from an unofficial source that the Chinese Ambassador had handed in a protest against the action the German Government had taken in a certain matter, and that the German Foreign Office had promised to give a categorical explanation by a certain date. The day after that date I called at the Foreign Office and asked them whether they had anything interesting for me. The very amiable clerk whom I saw gave me a few scraps of news and said that was all.

"But what about China?" I asked.

He looked quite taken aback.

"China?" he said. "We have no news from China."

I then, very apologetically, told him what I knew, and that his government's answer to the Chinese Ambassador was due the day before.

"Oh!" he said, "I beg your pardon. I will go and see my chief about it," and presently he returned with a sheet of foolscap on which Baron Marschall von Bieberstein had with his own hand written out the communication to be made to me. On leaving the Foreign Office I met Mr. Le Poer Trench, the first Secretary of the British Embassy, and told him the news I had just obtained, which was of some importance. The following day I met Mr. Le Poer Trench again, and he stopped me in the street and told me he had just been to see Marschall von Bieberstein about the Chinese matter, and that the Minister had replied to him in the identical terms of my telegram to Reuter's. He seemed very much impressed. It was poor Mr. Le Poer Trench who disillusioned me as to the glamour of diplomacy. One day he stopped me in the street evidently very excited. He was Chargé d'Affaires during one of the frequent absences on leave of Sir Edward Malet.

"I say, Hodgetts," he called out, "my name will go down to history. I have just signed a treaty with Germany."

"What," I exclaimed, "an offensive and defensive alliance?"

"No," he said, somewhat crestfallen, "only a commercial treaty about rice!"

Marschall von Bieberstein was subsequently transferred to Constantinople, and later appointed to London, where he died before he had had time to make his personality felt in England. Talking of this redoubtable diplomatist inevitably brings Turkey to my mind, and recalls an amusing incident told me by Charles Lowe, the Berlin *Times* Correspondent. When the young Kaiser paid his first visit to Constantinople, Lowe was sent after him to report on his movements, as Lowe's familiarity with the German official world would, it was believed, be useful.

The Sultan Abdul Ahmed gave the Emperor a big dinner, and on the same evening the British Ambassador held a reception, to which Lowe was invited. Many of the Sultan's guests looked in at the Ambassador's after the dinner, and, among others Herbert, Count Bismarck. Charles Lowe, who knew Herbert very well, asked him how the Sultan's dinner had gone off.

"Oh!" said Herbert, "the food was not so bad, but the wine was disgusting" (*abscheulich*).

Lowe was puzzled at this, because he knew that the Sultan had spared no expense and had wanted to "do the Emperor proud" as they say. He therefore made inquiries and elicited the amazing fact that the Sultan in his desire to please the Emperor, and knowing how absolutely national he was in all his tastes, had caused no other than German champagne to be served at the banquet!

As I have said, it was not always easy to find palpitatingly sensational news, for which the press had a morbid craving, in stolid slow-going Berlin. Nevertheless, thanks to my various sources of information, I was generally able to send at least one interesting telegram a day, but I remember a fatal day on which there was absolutely nothing. I was at my wits' end when I noticed in an obscure paper a vivacious article attacking Dr. von Bergmann, the famous surgeon, who had been Sir Morell Mackenzie's opponent, and had correctly diagnosed the Emperor Frederick's disease. According to this article, some ten years ago, Dr. von Bergmann had inoculated at the Charité Hospital a male pauper, in the last stages of consumption, with cancer. The unfortunate man recovered from consumption, but subsequently died in great agony of cancer. The facts were vouched for, and the Charité Hospital reports were quoted in corroboration of the statement. What was I to do? Here was an obscure paper spitefully raking up a ten-years-old scandal that had been carefully and successfully hushed up. Was that news? I determined to consult my English colleagues; they

all, without exception, told me they would not touch it, and did not consider that something which happened ten years ago was news. Somehow their arguments did not convince me, besides their unanimous decision showed me that I would have the field to myself, so I telegraphed the story. As may be imagined, it created a tremendous sensation. In the small paper in which it originally appeared it attracted no attention, but when it was published broadcast in the British press, it became a menace to the good name of German science. The German papers reproduced my telegram. The Minister of Culture, Count Zedlitz-Trischler, ordered an inquiry, and appointed a Committee to investigate the matter. I was successful in interviewing the Minister of Culture, and Dr. von Bergmann. The latter wrote a confidential report on the case, of which by great good luck I succeeded in obtaining a copy. Of course he was unable to deny the accusation. In the interests of science he had committed manslaughter, if not murder. A howl of indignation was raised by the socialist members of the Reichstag, but nothing happened. The German Government did not feel called upon to punish the eminent scientist. The humanitarian aspect of the case was ignored.

My work as Reuter's Special Correspondent was, I need hardly say, very strenuous. Other correspondents dispatched their news at certain times, generally in the evening, but I had to send off my news whenever I got it, red hot, in time for the evening papers. Moreover, I had no secretarial or other assistance, and could never take a day off. One day, however, in company with all my colleagues, I decided to have a holiday. An Englishman resident in Berlin, who was a great sportsman and member of a St. Hubertus sporting dining-club, organised some dog trials in the country and we all went off and had a jolly day, returning in the evening for a nine o'clock supper. As we were sitting down to table at the hotel patronised by the club, a waiter, who knew me, muttered in my ear: "Moltke

is dead." I immediately imparted the information to the others, and we were all furious. One of us exclaimed indignantly:

"This is the first holiday I have taken for a whole year, and Moltke must choose this very day to die on!"

Early next morning I went to the General Staff Office, in which building the old Field-Marshal had been permitted to continue to reside, and was received by Moltke's two giant nephews and their wives. With charming amiability they immediately gave me full details of their uncle's last moments, and, what had not been known, told me that for over a year past the veteran had been suffering from senile eczema, believed to be a sure harbinger of death.

Moltke had been playing his favourite game of Skat (a sort of three-handed whist) with his nephews and nieces on the previous evening, when he suddenly rose and left the room. He did not return, but was found dead.

It was pathetic to see that small wizened figure with its gentle, childish and innocent-looking face, lying on a field-bed and reminding one somehow very much of that other great soldier, the Duke of Wellington, both simple-minded, unsentimental slaves to duty.

The lying in state in the grand hall of the General Staff building was a very different affair. Here the Field-Marshal was surrounded by all the pomp and glamour that German militarism could command, while the people flocked, literally in their thousands, to have a last look at the modest and taciturn organiser of German victories. Did they have an uneasy presentiment that the passing away of this great strategist foreshadowed a *débâcle*?

Splendid and solemn as was the pageantry of this lying in state, the simple spectacle of the old warrior taking his last sleep in his modest bed-chamber affected me more.

The funeral was tremendous. The uniforms of every nation were represented. I had some difficulty in getting to a place

of vantage from whence to see it; although I had provided myself with a police pass, the police would not let me through to the General Staff building, but held the approaches to it against all comers. At a loss to know what to do, and feeling very desperate, I suddenly beheld a tall and evidently distinguished officer of the General Staff, stalking in the direction of the building. I instantly determined to follow his lead, and kept close behind him. At his appearance the police made way for him, and allowed me to follow; arrived successfully at the General Staff building I was welcomed by the *chasseur* of the Italian Embassy, who found a place for me facing the entrance. I saw the Emperor arrive with a magnificent wreath, which he carried himself into the building, and I saw all the other persons of note, as well as the foreign military attachés, the most dapper of whom was certainly the smart Japanese. But what interested me most was a little drama that was enacted just behind me; here there was drawn up as a guard of honour the first household company of the 1st Foot-Guards (Das Erste Guarde Regiment zu Fuss) in the quaint peaked shakoes of the time of Frederick the Great. In this company the members of the reigning family invariably served. Most of the officers were scions of German reigning houses. Several were wearing the family Hohenzollern Order *au cou*. The men were all giants, splendid fellows, and the officer in command, Premier Lieutenant von Prittwitz, was the tallest of the lot. A very smart officer and a great martinet. Von Prittwitz kept marching up and down in front of his men seeing that they held themselves properly and kept their dressing. Suddenly he stopped in front of a pale-faced timid-looking private, whose head was slightly drooping. Von Prittwitz raised the man's chin with his hand, and fired a volley of abuse at him. The man said something in reply, and immediately in a voice of thunder von Prittwitz gave a word of command, the soldier in obedience stepped a few paces out of the ranks. I was breathless. What was going to happen? Von Prittwitz

said a few words to a non-commissioned officer, who instantly ran off; in less time than it takes to tell an ambulance rattled up, and the pale-faced soldier was bundled in and driven off. Von Prittwitz had spotted him in time, and prevented his fainting in the ranks.

Another and less melancholy pageant of 1892, and one of older historical significance, was the unveiling of the Holy Coat of Treves. The cathedral of the ancient town of Treves, every stone of which is an archæological curiosity, claims to possess amongst its relics the seamless garment of Our Lord, which is unveiled and exhibited to the eyes of devout believers once every fifty years. It is perhaps a little inconvenient for Treves that Argenteuil claims to possess the original and has stigmatised that of Treves as a spurious imitation. But the people of Treves have only to recall the miraculous arrival of the relic in a chest which had formed part of the cargo of a shipwrecked vessel chartered by St. Theresa of Bohemia, and which had drifted up stream against the current to Treves, to be convinced of the authenticity of their treasure. The Bishop of Treves, whom I had the honour of waiting on, certainly adopted a somewhat latitudinarian attitude towards his relic, and suggested that it was all very well as an object lesson for exercising the faith of the people, "das Volk," but could not be expected to go down with the enlightened "Aufgeklaerten"; yet he threw no doubt on its authenticity, a subject indeed which he manifested a disinclination to discuss. He was much more disposed to descant on the virtues of the people of the Rhine Provinces as compared with the Germans of the North.

"Our people," he said, "are an amiable good-natured people, for they drink wine, they have nothing of the ferocity of the beer- and schnapps-drinking Northerners."

This kindly and sensible dignitary of the church arranged for me to have a good view of the unveiling ceremony from the gallery of the old cathedral, and was even induced to extend his

gracious permission to the presence of my friend, Fred Villiers, the artist war-correspondent, who wanted to take photographs and make sketches, he only asked me to beg him (Villiers knew no German) to do his sketching and photographing as unostentatiously as possible.

The actual ceremony was the most gorgeous spectacle I think I have ever witnessed. The choir was crowded with bishops and cardinals in their magnificent robes. There was also present a strong contingent of Maltese knights in scarlet and white and gold. The body of the cathedral was crammed with a variegated congregation in wonderful national costumes, and included a great number of pilgrims who had marched in procession from great distances, the most picturesque among these being the miners of different districts, especially those from Luxemburg in their quaint dress. There were fashionable ladies, and people of every rank and station. As the Holy Coat was unveiled, all that mass of polychromatic devotees, cardinals, bishops, Maltese knights, fashionable ladies, picturesque peasants and miners, prostrated themselves before it in adoration, all but a small group of three or four Prussian officers in plain blue, who stood erect and impassive, while everybody else was kneeling.

After the ceremony the congregation passed in single file before the relic. Each person had procured a small model of the Holy Coat, I possess mine still, and this was blessed with holy water by a priest.

For a whole week following, processions of pilgrims came tramping from all parts of catholic Germany to do homage to the relic. As these processions marched through the streets of Treves, travel-stained, and covered with dust, they shouted, rather than sang, their *benedicite*. One old lady in particular I shall never forget. She wielded a huge cotton umbrella, which had all the appearance of a club; her face was forbidding. She was evidently tired, and as she planted her formidable feet on the ground, and fiercely uttered her "Gebendeite," scowling

at each step, she looked like some Medusa, while her benedictions sounded more like curses. She was stout and warm and had evidently tramped a long distance, and the unwonted exercise had clearly not produced that benign and charitable frame of mind which we like to associate with religion.

Before saying farewell to Berlin I must, in fairness to the much maligned German officer, relate one of the best repartees that I have ever heard in my life. It was at an international dinner-party, given by an elderly widow, who liked to collect young people of various nationalities round her table. As we were going in to dinner *en bande*, as people do on the Continent, an Italian lady told a very gentle and unassuming staff-officer that all Germans were bad: "alle Deutsche schlecht," she said in her broken German.

The officer looked utterly annihilated, but replied, in the sweetest manner possible:

"Wirklich, gnaediges Fraeulein? Und doch werden sie so oft zum besten gehalten."

Which can only be translated by an Americanism:

"Indeed? And yet they are so often bested."

I have not left myself any space to describe a very interesting phase of Berlin life, the life of the numerous English young ladies, who used to crowd to the German capital to study music, and were usually consigned to the vigilant care of some formidable English veteran governess who interned them in austere convent-like establishments, where they were kept securely guarded against enterprising fortune-hunting German officers. Sometimes, however, they managed to give their custodians the slip and have a real night of it, going "Kneipen" at the various cafés and painting the town a pleasant but innocuous salmon colour.

Of those English veterans the most distinguished and aristocratic was a Miss St. Aubyns, whom her pupils used irreverently to call Stubbins behind her back.

CHAPTER XI

THE RUSSIAN FAMINE OF 1891–92

ELEVEN months' hard work as Reuter's Special Correspondent in Berlin had taken it out of me. To the need for a holiday was added the knowledge that my post could not be regarded as a permanency, according to the warning of the friend who had procured it for me. These considerations led to my asking for the cancellation of my agreement, but the letter making this request crossed one from Reuter's inquiring whether I would consent to go to Russia and visit the famine-stricken districts. Of course I jumped at the offer, but subject to conditions. The destination and duration of my trip were to be left entirely to my discretion. No written communications were to pass between us. All despatches and letters to be sent to a business firm in another country (Holland was decided on) and last I was never to have less than one hundred pounds in my pocket, the money to be telegraphed to the branch of the Russian State Bank indicated by me.

It was with a cheerful spirit that I started on my journey, with Moscow for my objective, St. Petersburg with its argus-eyed officials and police being a place to be avoided. The outrageous feature of the Russian calamity was that the Government had refused to give the famine its official recognition. In the eyes of the Government there was no famine, and Count Tolstoy, who had had the temerity to issue an appeal in the press of the world, had been severely admonished and even threatened with Siberia if he did not hold his peace. The situation was tragically humorous, and reminded me forcibly of the famous pronouncement of a major of the Prussian General

Staff. During a violent shower a number of people were sheltering at Kranzler's, Unter den Linden, Berlin's unique café in those days; amongst them an irascible major of the General Staff. Presently a timid civilian ventured to remark: "I think it has left off." The major thereupon authoritatively exclaimed: "It is raining." "I beg your pardon," said the timid civilian, "I assure you it has left off," whereat the major grew purple with rage, and shouted out at the top of his voice, as though he were giving the words of command to a battalion of grenadiers: "Hören Sie mal! (Look here!) When a Prussian Staff Officer says it is raining, IT RAINS!!!"

And when the Russian Government says there is no famine, there is none. Nevertheless the insubordinate subjects of the Tsar developed an aggravating habit of starving. My letters got through, created a sensation, and led to the formation of a commission under the presidency of the Heir Apparent to inquire into the causes and the best method of remedying the prevailing destitution. But this is advancing matters. When I arrived in Moscow there was no officially recognised famine, there were only "sufferers from the bad harvest," for whom money was being collected, for Tolstoy had made it impossible to deny the fact that there was suffering.

After eleven months' residence in what was still a poor country, where the painful thrift and penury of the population "jumped to the eyes," as the French say, and where even the uniforms of the soldiers were skimpy, it was a great change to come into spacious Russia. Immediately on crossing the frontier one seemed to breathe another atmosphere. It is not that the people had a more prosperous appearance, indeed the contrary was the case, but they looked more comfortable, more cheerful, and less careworn. Their suitable national costume did not inspire one with the disgust and pity produced by the poverty-stricken European clothing of the German proletariat. Then the clean and expansive Russian railway stations with their

excellent restaurants and the good-humoured, neat but loosely dressed gendarmes, officials and porters, all tall, powerful and healthy-looking men, gave an air of geniality and well-being to the scene. The nice clean snow, which covered the ground like a counterpane, and the indefinable bracing crispness of the frosty and yet benignant air, all helped to make one feel happy and cheerful, and grateful for having left the sordid and cramping air of Germany behind one. There was nothing petty or mean about this vast Russian Empire. Even the railway gauge was broader and the railway carriages more comfortable. Moscow, when that city was at last reached, was so different from Berlin. Here too one had a sensation of space, with its wide streets and low straggling but substantial houses. There were no signs of cheeseparing, no suggestion of makeshift, of hard struggles against grinding poverty. The poor were frankly destitute, they did not painfully strive to keep up appearances, and the well-to-do were sumptuous and luxurious. Besides, Moscow was the town in which I had spent the happy days of my early youth, it called to me.

At the famous Slaviansky Bazaar, where business men used to meet and lunch in the good (or bad) old days, there used to be a special "English" table at which the younger members of the British colony foregathered. To this I repaired almost immediately after my arrival. It was rather early and the table was deserted. Presently the Britishers began to drop in, and soon there was no vacant place. Everybody eyed me with curiosity, and gradually, one by one, they proceeded to recognise the stranger who had so indiscreetly intruded. The first to do so was Aylmer Maude, already a devoted admirer of Tolstoy's, whom he insisted on my looking up at once.

Count Tolstoy and his family were at tea when I arrived. The Countess, who spoke English perfectly, was seated in front of the *samovar* and her daughters sat round the table, while the Count, in his peasant dress, was pacing the room, holding

forth. With a slight hump on his shoulders and penetrating steel-grey eyes, he had a look which reminded me strongly of Ruskin. There was the same dreaminess about him, the same air of belonging to another world. He was in a very melancholy and pessimistic mood, and immediately opened out to me on the causes of the famine. Here again he was distinctly reminiscent of Ruskin, for he ascribed the misfortunes of the peasantry to the railways which had facilitated the export of grain. Like Ruskin he hated railways and machinery of all kinds. His mind was absolutely mediæval, and it was merely due to his general "cussedness" that he was not a reactionary and a supporter of Pobedonostzev, whom Stead had described as a modern Torquemada, and as the Black Tsar of Russia, thereby arousing the indignation of Alexander III., who would not tolerate any rivals.

Presently Count Tolstoy was called away, and in his absence the Countess related a very interesting incident. When the Government proposed to send the Count to Siberia she at once proceeded to St. Petersburg, sought an audience of the Emperor, and threw herself at his feet pleading for mercy for her husband. The Emperor gently raised her from the ground and explained to her that as the Count openly advocated the overthrow of the present régime, the Emperor had no other course left than to exile him. Amidst tears the Countess protested that nothing was further from her husband's mind than to pursue a political agitation, and that his propaganda was purely ethical, the quest of righteousness being the only thing in which he was interested.

"If you will guarantee that Count Tolstoy will abstain from political agitation I will give you my solemn word that he shall not be interfered with."

The promises were interchanged, and both parties were faithful to their word. Nicholas II. subsequently respected his father's undertaking even to the last moment, when the Orthodox Church felt itself called upon to excommunicate the Count,

whose attitude towards everything and everybody was distinctly trying. Dryden was of opinion that genius was allied to madness, and I certainly think that Tolstoy had crossed the border line.

Next day I received a visit from another mad genius, this was no other than my old friend, Professor Vladimir Soloviev, the philosopher, who had heard of my arrival. Professor Vladimir Soloviev, a mystic, a spiritualist, and a man of great learning, had for many years been the protagonist of Slavophilism, had stood for Russian nationalism, and had, with Dostoievsky, preached the doctrine that it was the mission of the Russian people to emancipate the world from the Egyptian bondage of Western, materialistic, scientific civilisation. On the accession of Alexander III. he had had the temerity to plead publicly for the pardoning of the murderers of Alexander II., and to represent that it was the duty of the Emperor as the head of the Orthodox Church to show an example of the true Christian spirit by forgiving his father's enemies. Needless to say this point of view did not commend itself to the reactionary entourage of the new autocrat, the appeal was nevertheless regarded as a noble and courageous manifestation of Russian mentality, although utterly quixotic and impracticable. A few years later, however, the charity of Professor Vladimir Soloviev's romantically constituted mind led him to advocate, in the interests of Christianity and true religion, a union of the Orthodox Church with the Church of Rome. This was going too far. Neither the reactionaries nor the Slavophils could stand that. It was felt that too much learning had made him mad, and Soloviev was metaphorically speaking cast out. This had made the poor philosopher take a despondent view of the condition and future of his country, and he came in hot haste to see me, as soon as he had heard that I was in Moscow, to tell me what was on his mind. He looked like a monk in mufti, with his long hair, his weird lustrous prophetic-looking eyes, and his thin, almost

transparent, ascetic countenance. There was a suggestion about him of some ill-omened bird premonitory of evil. In the intimacy of my private room he discharged his pessimism upon me. I published his prognostications at the time, but, out of consideration for him, I withheld his name and disguised his personality. The curious thing about those prognostications is that although they did not come true then, they have come true since, and, after all, in the life of a nation what are twenty-five years? He maintained that the famine was the natural consequence of bad government.

"The peasants," he said, "believe it to be the Tsar's duty to feed them. I have heard them say that if he did not fulfil this duty they would find another Tsar. What is society to do in the face of such ideas? How can a cataclysm be prevented? The little influence and energy which our society (read 'public opinion') possesses, the government strives to destroy. Only two forces keep the State together, the Church and the Army, and the present régime has made enemies of both."

He proceeded to illustrate this dictum by giving names and details which I thought best to suppress. He continued:

"We have many enemies, not only amongst our neighbours, but in our own house. The population of the Baltic provinces, once our most loyal subjects, are now our enemies. We have not only a German question there, but we are creating Esthonian, Lettish and Finnish questions. Not content with stirring up Finland, we are now elaborating a Tartar and an Armenian question. Of Poland I need not speak. We are living in terrible times. Our society is sunk in materialism, and cares for nothing but enjoyment, and the peasant has ceased to be the Tsar-worshipper of the past. Besides there appears to be at the head of affairs a set of Nihilists in disguise. They have altered their methods, and they are leading the country to ruin and disaster in the best traditions of loyalty to the autocracy."

Personally I did not believe in my friend's gloomy fore-

bodings. I could not see the possibility of a revolution, and I was quite right in my belief. Every reform in Russia has been the result of an unsuccessful war. The people were kept in subjection by fear. The present revolution is the result of two disastrous wars, but even these would not have culminated in a complete *débâcle*, had not autocracy itself become effete and lost its hold on "society." When the revolution broke out in 1917, there was no one to resist it. Even the Generals at Headquarters gave a sigh of relief. Rasputin had undermined the autocracy, for he had made it ridiculous by turning it into a burlesque Oriental despotism, and ridicule kills. As far back as 1913 when I was sent to Russia to investigate a proposed concession, I sniffed revolution in the air, and reported strongly against the investment of any money in Russia, for I found that the Emperor was universally despised, and that he stood absolutely alone, without friends or supporters, nobody trusted him.

But in the December of 1891 there were no signs of disintegration as yet. What I felt and expressed at the time was that the peasant needed moral as well as intellectual education, some greater freedom of the press, and some liberty of discussion. "More important," I said, "for Russia, as a civilised power, is it to try to make of her peasant an economic unit, instead of the helpless atom he is. Some kind of independence he must get, and that soon, and this the governing classes in Russia will have to recognise before long. (They did in 1905.) As for the abuses that obtain, they are inseparable from the case. Without a press, without a single safeguard, Russia has been the prey of self-seekers from time immemorial. What is most to be regretted is that the officials are often more honest than the private individuals. Public-spirited unselfishness is very rare and is not understood."

After my lugubrious interview with the gloomy Vladimir Soloviev, I sought my old friend Professor Storojenko, a genial cynic, who was nevertheless a convinced Comtist, and bore a

strong resemblance to the late Sir Charles Dilke, though devoid of that statesman's occasional acerbity of manner. Storojenko was, on the contrary, amiability personified and bubbling over with good nature. When discussing a subject or a book with him, he would invariably exclaim: "I can you give," and would proceed to produce out of his voluminous library the work in question, or the one bearing on the matter in hand. He was an Ukranian, and his rich nature had been kissed by the sunny south. Possessing a strong sense of humour, he had a fund of droll stories about everything and everybody. Once he told me an amusing story of Mackenzie Wallace, who spoke Russian very fluently, but occasionally made pardonable but ridiculous mistakes. Discussing the temperance question in Mme. Novikoff's drawing-room, and before a number of Russian ladies, he talked about entering a public-house; this word he translated literally, but in its literal translation it had the same significance as a *maison publique* in French. The shocked expression of Mme. Novikoff and her friends can be better imagined than described.

This dear old Rabelaisian professor received me like a returned prodigal. He introduced me to his charming wife, whom he had married shortly after I left Moscow in 1879, and was extremely interested at my proposal to visit the famine-stricken districts. He pointed out the dangers and difficulties of my task. The Government had refused to admit that there was a famine; how could it tolerate a description of the true facts in the press of Europe? For Reuter's with its numerous ramifications did not only supply the press of English-speaking countries, but that of the whole civilised world. Storojenko insisted on the necessity of great care and circumspection. He provided me with a number of letters of introduction to the smaller country gentry scattered about the districts I intended to visit, and supplied me with a number of envelopes bearing the imprint of a well-known firm of general merchants, in which he advised

me to enclose my letters. The Government exercised a severe censorship and carefully examined all suspicious-looking correspondence, but it was humanly impossible for them to open and read all commercial letters. As long as I addressed my letters in a commercial hand to a commercial firm, and refrained from registering them or doing anything calculated to attract attention to them, they would certainly get through. I followed this very sound advice, and all my letters reached their destination. Later, at Saratov, I came across an instance of how not to do it. An English governess received from some friends in England a Christmas card, but these guileless people, apprised of the wickedness of the Russian Post Office, to make sure that the seasonable greeting should safely reach its destination, registered the envelope in which the card was dispatched. What was the result? The letter was opened by the censor, considerably delayed, and finally delivered to the English governess with apologies by the police.

I did not remain long looking up my friends in Moscow, but, armed with letters of introduction, started on my travels as early as I could, having taken the precaution to purchase for the modest sum of Rs. 100 (the equivalent, at that time, of ten pounds), a sledging fur-coat, a so-called Dokha, this was of reindeer-skin on the outside, and lined inside with fox. Warm as this was I sometimes felt the bitter cold of the open steppes (with the keen wind blowing pins and needles into my face) as though I had no clothing on at all. My health was permanently undermined, for I still suffer from a chronic internal catarrh which I contracted in consequence of three months' exposure to the inclement weather of an exceptionally bitter Russian winter. In the towns the thermometer frequently fell to 40° Réaumur; what it was in the open country there was no means of telling. But I would willingly go through the experience again, if it were possible to-day, in order to obtain a first-hand idea of the condition of the people. I certainly do not regret

my expedition, even at the price I had to pay for it, for it gave me an insight into the life of the Russian peasant that I could not have obtained by other means. I visited the principal provinces of the interior, then I proceeded as far south as Voronej, from thence I went to Tambov, thoroughly exploring the districts. My next objective was Saratov, which I made my headquarters for extensive trips in the various regions of which that town is the centre, including the German colonies. Here I first saw camels drawing sledges through the snow on the frozen Volga, these belonged to Kirghiz and were bringing merchandise from Orenburg, about one hundred miles distant.

From Saratov I returned by train to Moscow, and then proceeded to Nijni Novgorod, whence I drove by sledge along the Volga to Kazan. From Kazan I made expeditions to the villages of the Tartars, the Tcheremissi and the Tchewasses. My letters were published all over the civilised world, and with special prominence by *The Times*, and created considerable sensation. They were afterwards published in book form, under the title of: *In the Track of the Russian Famine.*

I also had adventures of too personal a character to commit to paper at the time. Thus, for instance, when I visited an estate some fifty miles from Tambov, I was discreetly approached by the venerable nurse of the family and sounded as to whether I would be disposed to marry the only daughter of my host, a wealthy prince. The young lady was charming and even beautiful, but unfortunately I did not feel myself justified in contracting a matrimonial alliance when engaged on what I, perhaps rather foolishly, regarded as an important and responsible mission. On another occasion, at Saratov, I was visited in my hotel by a little girl of thirteen, the adopted daughter of some very interesting "intellectuals" who were organising relief work. This little girl wanted me to engage her as my secretary, to take her about with me and eventually bring her to England, the land of liberty, where she wanted to earn her living. I had

great difficulty in explaining to her that the idea was absolutely impracticable. She began to cry, so I gave her some money to buy sweets with, and console herself. After she had gone the waiter came in, and asked me whether I would give him her address. He had put a false interpretation on the perfectly innocent object of her visit.

At Saratov also, which is the great grain centre of that part of Russia, and called the Golden Port of the Volga, some of the corn merchants insisted on giving me a dinner, at which I soon discovered they had conspired to make me drunk. But I was fresh from Germany, and did not turn a hair. At the end of the banquet, however, I artlessly suggested a little beer, the usual wind-up in Germany. The merchants looked pale, but bravely assented, with disastrous result to themselves. Needless to say that this little feat increased my popularity very greatly.

The dinner to which I look back with greatest pleasure was the English Christmas dinner given me by the Tchitcherins in Tambov. Mme. Tchitcherin, herself an Englishwoman, offered me plum-pudding and mince-pies, and I, to her great delight, appeared in the conventional tail-coat and white tie, so dear to the Englishman, and formerly so rarely worn by the foreigner. Mme. Tchitcherin had a charming little boy, with bright intelligent eyes. Can it be he who is now one of the pillars of the Bolshevik Government?

My tour of the famine-stricken districts of Russia resembled nothing so much as the journey of Gogol's famous character, Tchitchikov, in his quest for *Dead Souls*, for I stayed at the country houses of the smaller landed gentry, but their mode of life was far from luxurious, and would have compared unfavourably with that of our small farmers. Even in our mining districts I have come across the cottages of miners who lived in far greater comfort and refinement than the average small country gentleman of Russia. The magnates were all away, for they only visited their estates in the summer, if at all.

The difference between the famine of 1891–2 and that of 1922, and the reason why the latter was so much more grievous, can be briefly explained. In pre-Bolshevik days there existed Zemstvos, or elective Local Government Boards, which stored reserves of grain for distribution among the population in years of famine. Although these reserves of grain were susceptible of malversation and peculation, they, nevertheless, did afford considerable relief. Moreover the existence of these Zemstvos was a source of comfort and support, for they could be appealed to, and they had the means of obtaining succour. I attended several meetings of such Zemstvos, notably those of Tula and Voronej, at which relief was voted. Then there was the Red Cross Society, which immediately proceeded to collect funds for the purchase of food for the necessitous peasants, and to open local branches in the distressed districts. Finally there were the local gentry, who had a direct selfish interest in saving their workers from starvation, to say nothing of more generous sentiments, in which the Russian educated classes have never been deficient.

But what is the position to-day? The country gentlemen have been expropriated, the Russian Red Cross, a Christian organisation, has ceased to exist in Russia, for its surviving members are fugitives, and the Zemstvos have been abolished. Nor is that all. The peasants have seized the estates of the country gentry, but they have been told that as all personal property has been abolished, the land has been nationalised, and its produce belongs to the State. The peasants are allowed to retain sufficient for their own requirements, but the surplus they must hand over to the government. Now the Russian peasant, when his angry passions are not roused, is, on the whole, a remarkably amiable and charitably disposed person, but to expect him to work for nothing is to betray an extraordinary ignorance of human nature. I have been told, on absolutely trustworthy authority, that in a letter to Gorki, who

is at present resident in Berlin, Lenin made the confession that if he had known the Russian peasant as he knew him now, he would not have attempted to impose the "lofty ethical code" of Karl Marx upon him. At any rate it was a mistake to assume that the Russian peasant, with his primitive instincts, if left to himself, would develop altruistic tendencies; for what happened? The peasant produced just enough for his own requirements, and no more, and when there was a bad harvest, as he had not allowed for a margin, he found himself confronted with starvation, with all means of relief removed. The lesson is simple. It is just as dangerous to defy the laws of political economy as it is to defy the law of gravity. If you defy the law of gravity you fall down, and you may break your neck.

The whole trouble in Russia, ever since the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, has arisen from a defiance of the laws of political economy, or, to put it in other words, from a desire to have the cake and eat it too.

When the serfs were emancipated the land they received was declared to belong to the Mir, the village commune, and it was by means of this communal system of land tenure, so fully described by the late Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, that the peasant was believed to be protected from pauperism. The Mir was supposed to be a sacrosanct Slavonic institution when it was really, as shown by Mayne, only the most primitive form of land tenure. Thus the peasant, instead of being freed, actually became the slave of the Mir, which, by the way, was collectively responsible for the taxes. Moreover, as it was necessary that labour should be available for the cultivation of the large estates of the country gentry, the peasants were given just enough land to starve on, not enough to live on, so as to compel them to work for the country gentleman. Thus the peasant now had two masters, where he formerly had but one. A more unhappy compromise it would be difficult to conceive.

In my articles I did my best to expose the vices of the

communal system of land tenure, but it was not until the advent of Stolypin, who was so foully murdered, that peasant proprietorship was introduced into Russia in the first decade of this century.

To turn to a less lugubrious subject, while I was staying with the estate-agent of the Duke of Leuchtenburg at Ivanovka, we had a call from the steward of the neighbouring estate of Count Strogonoff. He was a retired Major of Hussars, about seventy years old, but as smart as a young fellow of twenty. Entering the service in 1848, he had been through the Hungarian Campaign and the Crimean War. Having been wounded at Balaclava, he gave me a vivid description of the famous charge of the Light Brigade.

"We were sorry for them," he said; "they were such fine fellows, and they had such splendid horses. It was the maddest thing that was ever done. I can't understand it. They broke through our lines, took our artillery, and then, instead of making off with our guns, they went for us. I had faced the charge of the Heavy Brigade in the morning, and was slightly wounded. We had unsaddled and were very tired. Suddenly we were told, 'the English are coming.' 'Confound them!' we said. My Colonel was very angry, and ordered his men to give no quarter. I was lying at some distance, with my wound bandaged, when I saw them coming. They came on magnificently. We thought they were drunk by the way they held their lances. Instead of having them at rest, they waved them in the air, and, of course, they were easier to parry like that. The men were mad, sir! They never seemed to think of the tremendous odds against them, or of the frightful carnage in their ranks, during that long, desperate ride. They dashed in amongst us, shouting, cheering, and cursing. I never saw anything like it. They seemed perfectly irresistible, and our fellows were quite demoralised. We liked your fellows. When our men took prisoners they used to give them their *vodka*. Awful stuff it was!—more like spirits

of wine than anything else. Your fellows used to offer us their rum in exchange, but we did not care for it; it was too soft and mild. The Russian soldier must have his *vodka*!"

During my tour I had many delightful experiences, but also many that were very much the reverse. One night, for instance, had to be passed in a cow-shed, the only available shelter, and in the biting cold of a Russian winter, not comfortable to say the least. On several occasions I was even in danger of my life from robbers, and had some hairbreadth escapes, but this was all in a journalist's day's work.

In Kazan, however, I ran a much more serious risk. The Governor-General of that province ordered his Ispravnik, or Chief of Police, to look after me and take me into the native villages. The Ispravnik was a genial barbarian, who told me that when he was thus instructed by the Governor-General he asked him: "How about language?" Whereupon his chief had replied: "Oh! that's all right. He speaks better Russian than we do!" This, the Ispravnik told me, set him thinking, and he began to wonder whether I might not be a Russian political exile in disguise, none other in fact than Tchaikovsky, whom I had known in London, and who had been a schoolfellow of the Ispravnik's. Now, unfortunately for me, I bear a slight facial resemblance to that distinguished Nihilist, and nothing would have been easier for the police official than to have recognised me as his long lost schoolfellow, and claimed the reward. At that time, Kazan was not in railway communication with the rest of Russia, moreover, it was on the Vladimirskaya Doroga, the road to Siberia. If the Ispravnik had so willed, he could have had me packed off to that land of banishment, and no British passports would have been of any avail. Fortunately he was, comparatively, an honest man, and he told me genially:

"Of course, if you had been Tchaikovsky I would not have rounded on an old pal, but the moment I set eyes on you I could see you were not he."

I need not say how relieved I was, but for all that I did not feel quite safe until I had Kazan well behind me.

Another experience I had in this town was more agreeable, not to say flattering. As a result of my articles which appeared particularly prominently in *The Times*, the Russian government, as already mentioned, had appointed a Famine Relief Committee, with the Heir Apparent as President. A Commissioner of the Committee, M. Netchayeff-Maltzeff, a territorial magnate and a man of great enlightenment and independence of character, arrived in Kazan whilst I was there, and put up at the one and only hotel the town could then boast of, where, of necessity, I was also staying. I therefore took an early opportunity of calling on this gentleman, in order to obtain from him any information he might be willing to impart. He received me with the grace and charm for which the Russian *grand seigneur* is famous, and asked me whether I was the author of the articles in *The Times*, pointing to a file of that paper lying on a table. With becoming modesty, I hope, I admitted the impeachment.

"Then," he said, "what is the use of your coming to me for information, when we are studying your articles for guidance?"

I was overwhelmed.

M. Netchayeff-Maltzeff, however, was as generous as he was complimentary, and gave me a great many very interesting details. Among other things he gave me an account of the religious rites of the Tcheremissi. The following is a translation of one of their prayers:

God! great and good! Send Thy heavenly mists down upon us, draw the mists of the earth to Thee! God! great and good! Between the two mists cause the seed we have sown to grow fruitfully. Send us gentle breezes! Give us peace! Let the three kinds of beasts of the field multiply, make them fruitful, give them peace and health! Prosper our families, and give them peace! Preserve us from fire and water! God! great and good! As the sun shines, as the moon

rises, as the sea is full, so prosper the seed we have sown, so prosper our families, increase our cattle, increase the silver of the treasury! With every prosperity, God! great and good! gladden and bless us!

It is a simple, but fairly comprehensive petition.

In visiting the various provincial towns of Central Russia I was struck particularly by one remarkable fact. All the public buildings looked like Greek temples, more particularly the theatres, and every provincial capital, such as Voronej, Kazan, etc., had a theatre. All these buildings had been erected in accordance with designs drawn up under the direction of Alexander I., the contemporary of Napoleon, and all over Russia you were constantly being reminded of this remarkable ruler—of his idealism, his good intentions, and his painstaking devotion to detail.

As is well known, Russia becomes impassable in the spring, when what is locally called the "roadless season" sets in. That is to say, the vast snowfields begin to thaw and the whole of Russia is turned into a vast tideless lake. Then the ice "starts" on the rivers, and these also become obstructed. For some time communications are practically suspended. Consequently with the advent of spring I took my departure. On my way back I broke my journey in Berlin, where I called on Sir Edward Malet, who was good enough to express his views on the work I had done in terms of praise. My principal object in seeing him was to consult him concerning an opinion I had gained to the effect that, if Russia wanted to take Constantinople, she should be encouraged to do so, rather than prevented. To my surprise Sir Edward bristled up at once, and said in a most fire-eating tone:

"If Russia were to take Constantinople we should declare war immediately."

"But why?" I asked innocently.

"Because we have sixty million Mahommedan subjects in India."

I confess that I was unconvinced, but I followed his advice and steered clear of this contentious subject. After the abdication of Nicholas II., however, it was disclosed that we had promised Russia a free hand in Constantinople and the Dardanelles. If it is borne in mind that Turkey had the key to Russia's back-door in her pocket, people will easily understand that such a state of things must be humiliating to a great power, and was only tolerated because the rest of Europe was determined to maintain this uncomfortable arrangement. Much, if not all, of the "trouble in the Balkans," and the general unrest in the whole civilised world, was largely due to this intolerable injustice. On the other hand, if Russia had been given Constantinople, the dislocation which would have resulted would have kept her quiet for a whole generation at least. But all this has been set out by my late friend, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, very much more fully.

As I was walking along the Friedrich-Strasse, after my interview with Sir Edward Malet, I met Brinsley Richards, the newly-appointed *Times* correspondent in Berlin. He told me that Moberley Bell, the Manager, wanted my address, and advised me to call on him on my arrival, which of course I promised to do. On my journey to London I had a pleasing incident. On the boat I met a friend who very unnecessarily told the steward that I was the author of the articles on the Russian Famine, that had been appearing, whereupon the steward became very excited, and quite knocked me into a cocked hat by saying that he little thought he would have the honour of serving the distinguished author of those articles. In Berlin I had already discovered that my plain straightforward accounts of what I had seen and heard had attracted considerable attention, but by the time I arrived in London I found that the famine was virtually forgotten. My father, who hated newspapers, and was very much ashamed that his son should be a journalist, had not read a single word of my articles. However,

I called on Moberley Bell, who received me very cordially, and told me that if I cared to join the staff of *The Times* he would be pleased to offer me the first vacancy that occurred. He also introduced me to Mr. Arthur Walter, with whom I had quite an interesting interview.

A few days later I went to see my old friend and chief, the irascible James Forrest, Secretary of the Institution of Civil Engineers, who chaffed me a good deal about what I had been doing, and asked what my next achievement was to be. I told him that Moberley Bell had promised me the first vacancy on *The Times*.

"Then you've got a damned fine billet now," and he rang a bell. "Bring me *The Times*," he said to the anxious attendant who had obeyed his summons. Then he unfolded that great paper before my eyes, and showed me a passage that nearly stunned me. Brinsley Richards had committed suicide the day before. It was a strange coincidence that the very man who had sent me to Moberley Bell should have actually supplied the vacancy I was waiting for. But it was too good to be true. I bolted off to *The Times* at once, only to learn that Berlin had been promised to another. Moberley Bell, however, begged me to take charge of Dalziel's Agency in Paris, and after obtaining the consent of Reuter's I light-heartedly accepted that onerous post.

CHAPTER XII

PARIS UNDER THE REPUBLIC

When, on my return to London, I reported myself to Reuter's, they told me rumours had reached them to the effect that Russia was preparing for war, and they therefore suggested my making a tour of Poland to ascertain whether this was so or not. Now I knew perfectly well that Alexander III. was a peaceful monarch, and that the condition of Russia was not at that time of a kind to warrant her in entering on any military adventures. Moreover, I had been confidentially told in Berlin a story which seemed to indicate that the boot was on the other leg. After the grand autumn manœuvres, there had been a joint council of war of German and Austrian army commanders, at which the two Emperors were present. It was represented by the leading strategists of both countries, that, as France was coquetting with Russia, and neither power was prepared for war, now was the time to smash Russia, before France could be of any material assistance. Russia once defeated, France might be easily laid low and prevented from giving trouble for many years to come. If this moment were not seized the two nations might conceivably become very strong and develop into two jaws of a powerful nut-cracker which would crush Germany and Austria between them. The veteran Field-Marshal von Blumenthal was reported to have been particularly urgent and insistent in labouring this point. The German Emperor, however, according to my informant, indignantly rejected the idea. He declared that he would never be induced to wage a preventive war, and added, theatrically, that if he was attacked, then God would help him to defend his country. If this story was true,

then, it must be confessed, years effected a great change in the Emperor's sentiments, although it is quite possible that he did not then think the time was opportune. Judging by the source of my information I am still inclined to attach credence to the story, which, by the by, I have never seen in print, nor, in view of the confidential nature of the communication, was I at liberty to publish it myself. Be this how it may, I was firmly convinced that Russia was not meditating war, but knowing how difficult it is to prove a negative, I did not like the idea of the proposed mission. While meditating whether I should accept it or not, I accidentally met my old friend, then Major, Wolfe Murray in the street. He was most anxious to see me and asked me whether Tchaikovsky was a Nihilist.

"Of course he is," I replied.

"Well then, I *did* put my foot in it!" he exclaimed. "I was sent to St. Petersburg with Sir Peter Lumsden, and at a review of the guards I was presented to the Grand-Duke Vladimir, who commands them. He asked me where I had learned to speak such good Russian, and I told him in England.

"'Who taught you?' the Grand-Duke inquired.

"'A man called Tchaikovsky!'

"'Ah!' said Vladimir, drily, 'I dare say he prefers the English climate to that of Russia,' and rode away. What a *faux pas*!"

I then told him about my proposed trip to Poland, and asked him his advice about it.

"Don't go," he said, "you'll do no good. Unless you are a soldier and know what to look for, you will be hopelessly at sea, and will be quite unable to tell whether they are preparing for war or not. Even for a soldier it would not be an easy matter to find out."

That clinched it, and I declined the offer with thanks. Shortly afterwards, as already stated, I was sent to Paris to take charge of Dalziel's Agency there.

Paris in the early 'nineties was still rather a mournful place

to any one who could remember what it was like under the second empire. The marks of the hand of the German invaders, which had done so much to deface *la ville lumière*, and the dastardly treacherous disfigurements caused by the Commune, had not been wiped away, whilst such tinselled splendours of the period as had been allowed to survive, had lost their brightness and had got "seedy." The Grands Boulevards were much in need of paint, the pavements were patchy, and there was an air of shabby gentility about the distinguished looking French people one met in the streets, especially the men. The great reconstruction schemes, which did so much to rejuvenate Paris, had not even been commenced; and yet, though deprived of its Tuileries, and though its Bois de Boulogne had been virtually denuded of trees, Paris could not help looking magnificent; perhaps the very shabbiness of the meretricious parts of the town made the finer and older relics of her splendid history stand out all the more prominently. But gone were the smart soldiers of Napoleon III., gone the elegant *sergents de ville*, in their place one encountered slovenly *poilus* and equally slovenly *agents de police*. In the Avenue des Acacias too, the carriages, unless they were graced by ladies of whose reputation there could be no doubt, were not as well appointed as of old, there were cabs and vehicles hired by the day amongst them, with sightseers from every part of the world, and badly, sombrely dressed *bourgeois*. The Champs-Élysées also had ceased to be the delight of children, they had been obliged to take refuge in the Pré Catelan. Generally Paris had become more gloomy, and the spontaneous gaiety of the people had departed from her streets.

When I arrived there, Lord Dufferin had just been appointed our ambassador, and was contributing to the amusement of the French capital by riding a bicycle in the Bois every morning. If the Archbishop of Canterbury were to take it into his head to stroll daily in the Park smoking a clay pipe and

attended by a bull-terrier, he would hardly astonish communicants of the Church of England more than Lord Dufferin did the Parisians by riding a bicycle! In those days a gentleman with any self-respect could only take his exercise on horseback. The bicycle, which was practically a new invention, was all very well for young men who could not afford horses, but for an ambassador! The various French people in society to whom I had letters of introduction, then all professed to be scandalised at the spectacle of the British Ambassador, a Marquis, and a former Viceroy of India to boot, taking the air on a bicycle like any counter-jumper. A very brilliant lady, herself the wife of a marquis, told me that Lord Dufferin was beginning badly.

"No doubt," she said, "he feels it will be difficult to follow so popular an ambassador as Lord Lytton, and so is trying to go one better than he did. But although Lord Lytton was very democratic and Bohemian, and frequented artists and people of that sort, in order to curry favour with our Republican Government, he, nevertheless, always remained a gentleman!"

I was very much amused, however, to find, after some little time, that Lord Dufferin, by his quiet example, ended by overcoming the prejudices of Parisian society, and actually made bicycling fashionable in Paris. Of all his many triumphs that was, I think, the greatest.

In those days, government circles were regarded and treated with sublime contempt by "society" with a big S. The President was called derisively "*le patron*" and his consort "*la patronne,*" the title usually given to the person who runs a shop or restaurant. M. Sadi Carnot was then the holder of that office. He was called *l'homme en bois*, and his figure in wood was freely sold on the boulevards. By pulling a string the figure was made to raise its hat and to make an awkward bow, this was described as "*le salut de M. Carnot.*"

Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who had been his political

secretary in India, gave me a letter of introduction to Lord Dufferin, Moberley Bell gave me one to the famous M. de Blowitz, *The Times* Correspondent, and I also had a letter to the Embassy Secretary, Austin Lee, who was later knighted and made our Commercial Attaché. When I arrived in Paris, Austin Lee had just got married to an American widow, Mrs. Turner by name, but as he had not gone through the world with his heart unscathed, being a man of great social charm and of a susceptible disposition, my friend Sir Dennison Ross used to speak of him as "oft in danger, Austin Lee."

Lord Dufferin received me with that affectionate amiability for which he was distinguished. He had an entirely unfounded idea that he bore a strong facial resemblance to Lord Beaconsfield, and used to try to increase the likeness by "artful aid." Thus he wore his hair very much in the same way as Lord Beaconsfield did his, he also wore a tuft and sported an eyeglass, which, as Thackeray said when describing the monocle of the immortal Major Pendennis, was "spectacles in disguise." Moreover, he endeavoured to imitate the fiendish Machiavellian expression of countenance of his supposed prototype, and cultivated a cynicism which was really foreign to his nature. His genial kindliness of heart had an obstinate way of asserting itself and of shining through this artificial façade of desperate wickedness. In one respect he did not imitate the statesman who gave our sovereign an imperial title and brought "peace with honour" from Berlin (of all places), Lord Dufferin was always very quietly dressed, as became a *grand seigneur*.

On the day when I saw him first, he was overflowing with affection, and, as he sat in his chair, caressed and almost hugged his own leg, as though it was a child, for want of some other object on which to lavish his tenderness. As I was leaving after an interview extremely flattering to my self-esteem, I ventured to ask after Austin Lee, who had just gone for his honeymoon. Lord Dufferin fixed me with his glittering

smile, raised his finger to the ceiling, and replied in seraphic accents: "He is right up there—in the seventh heaven," and then, suddenly changing his tone, and reverting as it were to mundane affairs, he added sardonically, "but he will be back in a fortnight."

I may here mention a story Sir Dennison Ross told me of Lord Dufferin, in which that great diplomatist was not allowed to have the last word. On his retirement, he approached Sir Dennison and confided to him that he wanted to take lessons in Persian.

"Only," he said, "I don't want Lady Dufferin to know about it. For, when I mentioned my intention, she only said it would be wasting my time as all the houris spoke Arabic."

Not long after my interview, I was invited to dinner where I found myself seated near Lord Terence Blackwood, Lord Dufferin's second son, who subsequently succeeded to the title but has since likewise joined the great majority. I was particularly struck with the beautiful table ornaments from every part of the world, and asked Lord Terence whether he could tell me the history of some of them. Now Lord Terence had a slight impediment in his speech which gave a certain emphasis to his memorable reply.

"Well," he said, "I don't quite know the history of all these things, but speaking generally, when a thing looks pretty and artistic we say it's Indian, but when it's ugly we call it — C-c-c-canadian."

Poor British Empire! Splendid monument of British energy, tenacity and pluck, but oh! how inartistic!

There was at the Embassy in those days a newly joined attaché, the most handsome, the most splendid, the most dazzling masculine figure I think I have ever seen. He was then in the glory of his youth, and at the Embassy garden parties the ladies used to stare fascinated at his beauteous person, but he was entirely unspoilt, unconscious of their worship, just a wholesome good-looking, glorious Englishman, without side or affectation,

but with race and breeding in every line and movement; it was Reggie Lister, the darling of the diplomatic world. Without that classical distinction, that air of the eighteenth century, which caused King Edward VII. to nickname his brother, Lord Ribblesdale, "the ancestor," the Hon. Reginald Lister could never be mistaken anywhere or in any circumstances for anything else but an aristocrat, yet not an aristocrat of the artificial times of powdered wigs and gold-headed canes, but rather an aristocrat of the daring adventurous days of good Queen Bess, a contemporary of Edmund Spenser's and of Sir Walter Raleigh.

A very different-looking person was the redoubtable *Times* correspondent, M. de Blowitz. A witty German with a mordant tongue once described him as having come from "Hinter-Galizien," but that was not true, for Blowitz was born in Bohemia. His name was not Blowitz at all, but Oppen, he merely added the territorial designation for greater dignity. It is as if Mr. Smith of Peebles should call himself de Peebles. In appearance he was a monstrosity, a freak of nature, for when seated he looked like a giant with his leonine head and abundant grey hair, his tremendous torso and formidable "figure"; but when he stood on his tiny feet and diminutive legs, he had the stature of a dwarf. I do not know why it is that dwarfs are usually ill-tempered, but that is nevertheless the case; your huge giant, who could crush you in the hollow of his hand, is generally a genial and utterly amiable person, but not so the angry little lump of humanity of four foot nothing, who, as a rule, is querulous and snappish. Blowitz was no exception, he was, moreover, morose, and a creature of moods. He spoke English with great fluency, but a dreadful accent, and so mispronounced some of his words that it was often difficult to guess his meaning. Thus, in telling me an anecdote which, I regret to say, I have forgotten, he used the word linen, but pronounced it lyenen, so that I was at a loss for some time to know what he was talking about and missed the point of his story. I learned

later that he was indebted for the splendid English of his articles to his amanuensis, who translated them for him, and was really a man of great attainments, but unambitious.

To me, coming as I did with an introduction from the man who directed the fulminations of the Thunderer, M. de Blowitz was almost amiable, although it was rather in the manner of Jupiter seated on Olympus, benevolently unbending to a *ridiculus mus*. However, he gave me some very sound and excellent professional advice, for which I was duly grateful.

One of those Parisian Bohemians to whom nothing is sacred, related a story in connection with Blowitz which, though very "French," is not unprintable. A well-known actress, who was believed to be on friendly terms with the great man, one day arrived very late for rehearsal; profuse in her apologies, she explained to the stage-manager that she had been delayed by M. de Blowitz.

"*N'en parlons plus, Madame,*" the stage-manager indulgently replied; "*nous savons tous que,* Times is money."

The French Minister for Foreign Affairs was then M. Ribot, and Lord Dufferin was very anxious that I should call on him. I took the modest view that M. Ribot had other and more important things to do than to receive young and insignificant journalists, but Lord Dufferin insisted.

"He is quite a decent fellow," he said, "and there's no harm in going to see him. He was a village schoolmaster originally, I believe. This sort of man is flattered when an English gentleman calls on him. I'll give you a letter of introduction to him."

My interview with M. Ribot at the Quai d'Orsay only tended to confirm Lord Dufferin's statement. If M. Ribot had not been a village schoolmaster, he certainly ought to have been. While perfectly correct and dignified, and a very imposing, not to say handsome figure, M. Ribot had absolutely nothing of the sparkle and elegance of a diplomatist. His manner was dry, reserved

and pedantic, and in his demeanour towards me, while courteous, he was cold and rigid, with the austerity of a man who is anxious to maintain, but not quite sure of, his own dignity. Even so does the schoolmaster comport himself before the new boy whom he wishes to impress and of whom, on account of his parentage, he is half afraid.

M. Clemenceau, whom I had met years ago in London, received me very differently. He had "no frills on," but he was in a cynical and unamiable humour. He had a flat *au quatrième*, in a small street west of the Champs-Élysées, which was a veritable museum of Japanese *objets d'art*, for he had spent some years in Japan. Severely dressed in black, his black eyes sparkling vivaciously and alone betraying the unconventional genius behind that mask of *bourgeois* austerity, he was most entertaining and hit out vigorously right and left. Already a force, he had not yet become the maker and destroyer of governments into which he very shortly afterwards developed. He chose just then to consider himself as a passive looker-on, a warrior who had fought his battles, a wounded veteran ending his days in retirement. But that fit did not last long. He had the gift of talking most interestingly, with great volubility and apparently with perfect frankness, and I went away feeling that I had sat at the fountain of French political wisdom, and had imbibed knowledge, but when I came to think over what he had said and endeavoured to crystallise his liquid torrent of eloquent criticism and abuse I discovered that he had told me nothing. A few platitudes, a few generalisations, and that was all, but so originally presented, and with such an air of having confidences unwillingly dragged from him, until, yielding to my adroitness and overmastered by his own indiscretion, he had blurted out everything he knew, that for the moment one felt overwhelmed.

Through the wife of that great journalist and publicist, Richard Whiteing, the author of *No. 5, John Street*, I got into

a very pleasant Anglo-American French set. Mrs. Whiteing was the daughter of an American diplomatist, who had been the first U.S. representative in Japan, and she had gathered round her a most charming circle of French as well as American people, through whom I derived a very good insight into French family life, which has so many lovable aspects, especially striking being the authority of the mother in a French household, and the exquisite courtesy and respect with which the well-bred Frenchman treats his womenkind, particularly his mother and his wife. I speedily formed the opinion that while French society is far less brilliant and amusing than it is reputed to be, it is also far more virtuous and respectable.

The amusing things one heard in Paris were more rarely said in the *salons des gens du monde* (*où l'on s'ennui*) than in literary and artistic coteries. Thus I heard what I thought a very witty remark about Oscar Wilde from a French lady journalist. The eccentric genius in question, whose play *Salomé* had been prohibited by the English licenser of plays, had translated that lurid drama into French, and had arrived in Paris to take out French naturalisation papers, and shake the dust of England off his feet.

The French lady journalist was discussing this momentous event with what Wilde worshippers would have condemned as unbecoming flippancy, and then exclaimed:

"How stupid of him to want to become a naturalised Frenchman! As an Englishman he was unique and interesting, but in France," with a gesture of contempt, "we have so many like him!"

Among other people whose acquaintance I made were the Holsteins, they were a family of Russian refugees, very harmless quiet people whose opinions were too liberal for the Tsarist government. In order to escape exile to Siberia they had fled to Paris, where the mathematical attainments of old Holstein enabled him to earn a modest living. As I had been recently in

Russia, they plied me with questions and eagerly asked for news of their country. The old ladies of the party were charming and cultured, and I could not help reflecting how short-sighted was the policy which condemned to exile such cultivated and gentle people, who, if given a field in which to exercise their abilities, might have been of real benefit to their country. As it was, they had been compelled to join the throng of the enemies of the government. Harmless, and perhaps even useful at home, they had become a positive danger abroad, where they helped to keep alight the smouldering embers of sedition and conspiracy. When one remembers that men like Lenin only became a real menace to the autocracy after they had fled their country and found an asylum abroad in which to hatch their plots, one is led to the conviction that it was the ineptitude of the Tsarist government which brought about its own downfall. If the Tsar could only have been saved from his friends! They were really more dangerous to him than his enemies!

Talking of Russians reminds me of a weird adventure I had in Paris, the city of adventures. One evening as I was about to enter the Passage des Princes, where there was a very good little restaurant kept by Noel Peters, my attention was called to an altercation between two young ladies and a cabman. It was quite clear that the ladies did not understand the cabman, and that he did not understand them. Quixotically I offered my services, and very soon discovered that the young ladies were Russians, one of them at least, was a lady, the other, her maid. They were going to dine with an uncle at the restaurant, and wanted the cabman to fetch the whole party at a certain hour. There was also a difficulty about the fare. Having satisfactorily explained matters to the cabman, I was cordially thanked and asked for my name and address, as the young lady, who was very pretty, wanted to see me again and thank me once more. The fact that I spoke Russian had strongly appealed to her. Scenting a romance I gave her my card and bowed my adieu. Several

days passed, and I had almost forgotten the incident, when I received a mysterious letter, which had been left by hand, I was told. It was in Russian, and dated from a house in the Avenue de la Grande Armée. The writer of the letter reminded me of the incident in the Passage des Princes, and said that if I had honourable intentions towards the young lady I had met, the writer of the letter would be glad to receive me at her flat on a certain day, where I would meet the young lady, who was her niece, was of good family, had a handsome portion, and would make an exemplary wife to any honest young man. I was completely taken aback, such intentions as I had were strictly honourable, but certainly not matrimonial, besides I thought the whole thing looked like a trap. In vain is the snare spread in sight of any bird. Paris was a funny place, and I bethought me of "Ferdinando and Elvira" in the *Bab Ballads*, and W. S. Gilbert's famous line:

> "A fool is bent upon a twig, but wise men dread a bandit."

and so I decided to take no further notice of the letter, and never solved the mystery of the pretty Russian young lady.

CHAPTER XIII

WITH THE "NEW YORK WORLD"

My relations with Dalziel proved to be even less permanent than those with Reuter's, and after some time I found myself back again in London free-lancing, for France was just then in the enviable position of a happy country without a history, a condition of things not destined to endure for long. So dull and uninteresting had French news become, that Mr. Le Sage,[1] the manager of the *Daily Telegraph*, had deemed it necessary to come to Paris to see whether he could not brighten things up. He roundly abused his Paris office for being so resourceless. When they explained to him that things were quiet, he got impatient, and reproached them for not getting up a revolution. "Nothing was easier in Paris," he averred, and added that he would in his younger days have himself put up barricades in the streets. But he forgot that the glorious days of the Second Empire had departed.

A Dalziel reporter informed me with great glee how during the manœuvres he had wrecked several troop trains, and killed thousands of French soldiers.

"Of course," he explained, "the news was officially contradicted next day, but it was a godsend to the evening papers."

With such journalistic enterprise I was unfortunately unable to compete. My methods were too old-fashioned, so I got out as I speedily discovered I could not get on.

Shortly afterwards I made the acquaintance in London of Poulteney Bigelow, the brilliant American, who had been to school and Bonn University with the German Emperor. Poulteney Bigelow, the son of a diplomatist, who had ended his

[1] Now Sir John.

brilliant career as American Ambassador to France, a member of what must be called the American aristocracy, was a born Bohemian, hating conventionality like poison, and never so happy as when he was roughing it. He was a wiry man of medium height with kindly, sympathetic, twinkling little eyes, and a thin, nervous mouth. He seemed to be hung on wires, and always looked as though he had just arrived from, or was just about to depart for, some exploring expedition. At the time when I first met him, poor Poulteney Bigelow was literally suffering from an inconvenient superabundance of this world's goods, for his charming wife, "meine Gnaedigste," as he called her, had tastes diametrically opposite to his. She loved entertaining and society, not necessarily society with a big S, for she hated being bored, but the society of the elect—of witty and brilliant people. She had one of the large houses on the Chelsea Embankment, in which she entertained lavishly and even gave dances. All this was anathema to Poulteney Bigelow. He used to slip away and, unobserved, drop down the Danube in a canoe or explore the waters of the Far East. He once even went round the world in a sailing boat. Such incompatibility of tastes was bound to lead to friction, and finally terminated in separation. But although ill-matched, the Bigelows were charming people. Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow used to say the most wonderful things in a calm commonplace tone of voice, and was like a new revelation to me. One day she asked me whether I knew a young man, who was being a good deal talked about, called Hichens.

"They tell me," she said, "that he does not believe there is such a thing as a virtuous woman in the world, but," bridling up, "he is going to meet *me* to-night."

On another occasion, as I was calling, some American woman rose to leave, and by way of farewell said:

"Of course you are going to have your portrait painted by Sargent."

Whereat she replied:

"What! and have my secret vices exhibited to the public! Certainly not!"

Alphonse Daudet had just been paying a visit to London, and had been interviewed on his impressions of the Metropolis, and this had caused a great deal of comment. Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow was furious with him.

"Fancy," she exclaimed angrily, "a little thing with its hair all over its eyes, daring to have opinions about London! And he finds London quiet, too!"

Somebody ventured to suggest that he should go to New York, where he would find more of the same kind of quiet, to which remark Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow instantly retorted:

"He will, when he dies!"

Needless to say Mrs. Poulteney Bigelow was from Philadelphia.

Poulteney Bigelow was of such a kindly disposition that he showered his benefits on all with whom he came in contact, and even exhibited a friendliness towards me which quite took me off my feet, for he asked me what I was doing, and then declared that he must find me a billet. I took the will for the deed, felt duly grateful, and forgot all about our conversation, but not he. Some days later I was invited to a dance at his house, and after I had been doing my pleasant duty by a number of charming American young ladies, he suddenly took me aside and introduced me to a stout florid-complexioned gentleman, with a Bardolphian nose and a look of importance rather suggestive of the late Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. This gentleman was Mr. Ballard Smith, the London Correspondent of the *New York World*, which was the property of that famous millionaire, Mr. Joseph Pulitzer. It appeared that Mr. Joseph Pulitzer required a secretary, who would have nothing much more to do than to draw his salary of £800 a year and be amiable; he was, however, expected to be a linguist, an English gentleman, and an Admirable Crichton generally. Although journalism was in those days

regarded as a parasitic profession, I knew myself too well to believe that I should ever make a successful parasite in the home of an American millionaire. But it was my rule in life never to refuse an opportunity, so I invited Mr. Ballard Smith to luncheon at a small West End Club, of which I was then a member, in order to discuss the proposal at our leisure. If you take a man to a meal at a good club you very soon find out what sort of a person he is, and the moment we had sat down to luncheon, Mr. Ballard Smith revealed himself. He snatched the bill of fare out of my hand and began to examine the prices. It soon became quite evident that he was absolutely unaccustomed to the society of gentlemen, and arguing from the adage, "Like master, like man," I proceeded to have the gravest misgivings regarding Mr. Joseph Pulitzer himself.

For all that, I decided to make the experiment of entering his service. Mr. Pulitzer happened to be staying at Beaulieu on the Riviera, and before finally engaging me desired me to come and stay with him in order to satisfy himself of my fitness for the vacant post.

And so, one day, I found myself at Dover walking down a gangway to reach the Calais steamer. On gaining the deck I put my hand in my pocket for the purpose of giving a shilling to the porter who was carrying my luggage, when my elbow encountered something soft, and I was hurriedly pushed aside by an officious attendant. Turning round rapidly, I discovered that I had inadvertently embedded my elbow in the waistcoat of an elderly gentleman with rather bilious greyish green eyes, a funny supercilious little nose and a grizzly beard, who wore a quaint, muffin-shaped, soft, black felt hat, and a rather shabby overcoat. It was no less a person than the late Marquess of Salisbury, looking anything but aristocratic. This was the first time that I had come in contact with the great Conservative statesman, although I had frequently seen him in London hovering over second-hand book shops. During the crossing

he stood amidships, munching biscuits out of a paper bag and looking unutterable things at the sea, whilst a veteran member of the crew stood beside and entertained him in conversation in the easiest and most unembarrassed manner imaginable. At Calais, after a delicious *déjeuner*, I took my seat in the train and sat wondering why we did not start on our journey, when the reason of the delay was suddenly revealed. The two central portals of the station were thrown open, and there emerged the shabbily attired Lord Salisbury. This time, however, every movement was instinct with urbane dignity as he graciously raised his hat, and with exquisite politeness smiled and bowed to the gold-laced and resplendent *chef de gare* who saluted him with truly French demonstrativeness as he stepped on to the platform. For a moment these two solitary figures occupied the stage, and stood facing each other. It was an historic scene of international courtesy premonitory of the *entente cordiale*.

When I arrived in Paris I saw Lord Salisbury driving in a shabby cab to the P.L.M. railway station. He eyed me suspiciously. He was also going to Beaulieu.

Mr. Pulitzer, when he heard of his arrival, was very anxious that I should interview the British statesman. My assurances of the futility of any such attempt were useless. Certain of failure, I presented myself at the famous villa at which the head of the Cecil family lived, and asked an amiable young footman whether his grace was at home.

The reply was in the affirmative, but I had to state my business before my card could be taken in. Then a strange thing happened. I heard a noise not unlike an explosion, and presently the amiable footman returned, looking pale and scared and obviously trembling. He explained to me very apologetically that he had made a mistake, and that his lordship was *not* at home.

I am happy to say that this journalistic failure did not seem to prejudice me in the eyes of Mr. Pulitzer, to whose reception

of me I must now return. A room had been engaged for me at the Hôtel des Anglais by Arthur Brisbane, an old acquaintance, who was virtually running Pulitzer at the time. The latter gentleman occupied a beautiful villa practically on the sea, but the tideless Mediterranean was so tame a piece of water, in the eyes of his American guests, that they always spoke of it contemptuously as "the River." When I presented myself at this highly ornamental residence it was deserted, but very soon the various members of the house-party began to drop in by dribblets. Mrs. Pulitzer, a beautiful, tall brunette, in the prime of life, was accompanied by a Falstaffian figure, Judge Fielders. This was a delightful person who did not mind what he said, no more did anybody else. To the uninitiated it may be explained that Joseph Pulitzer was in politics a Democrat, and that the President at the time, Grover Cleveland, was of the same party, yet Judge Fielders did not hesitate to tell me later, in the hearing of the whole house-party that:

"Of course all decent people in America are Republicans." It did not take me long to discover that all Mr. Pulitzer's guests, including the recalcitrant Judge, were satellites.

Our host was the last to put in an appearance. He had been out riding with Arthur Brisbane. It is much to the credit of this brilliant journalist, that he had induced his chief to trust himself to a horse. Mr. Joseph Pulitzer, it must be remembered, was, when I first met him, a physical wreck, he was virtually blind, and his digestion and nerves had gone to pieces. He had, at first, indignantly rejected the proposal to ride, but Brisbane, for whom he had a great admiration, had gained such an ascendancy over him that he eventually agreed to go out on a lead. He soon took such pleasure in the exercise and acquired such confidence, that he became an excellent horseman. In this he showed considerable courage, when his blindness is taken into consideration. That he learned to ride well is not so surprising, for he possessed an iron will and great tenacity of purpose, and

it may be said in general that he ended by excelling in everything he undertook.

He was, of course, very tired from his ride, and did not devote much attention to me. An impressive and pathetic figure he looked as he entered the room in which we were all assembled. Very tall, very thin, emaciated even, with heavy dark glasses covering his eyes, a well-trimmed beard, and an air of utter listlessness and languor, as of a man who had lost all his illusions, here was the owner of fabulous wealth, which he had himself assiduously amassed, the magician who, by a wave of his wand, as it were, had called into being all the luxury and gorgeousness by which he was surrounded, on whose half-expressed wish his minions waited, who could make or mar the lives of innumerable dependants, whose hospitality was being so lavishly extended to his guests. Here he stood, a feeble, physical wreck, incapable of enjoying the things his wealth had placed at his feet, indifferent to everything, weary and worn, blind, and helplessly dependent on others. I felt profoundly sorry for this unhappy man whom so many foolishly envied.

He did not remain with us long, for he had to retire for an hour's massage. He was massaged twice a day for an hour at a time, and always travelled with his masseur.

The dinner, at which he appeared, was short but perfect, though the conversation was somewhat restrained in his presence, except in the case of the irrepressible Judge Fielders, who was consistently irresponsible.

The evening was devoted to poker, while our host retired early. I spent several days very pleasantly, though rather uneasily, wondering what opinion the great man was forming of me. We had several chats and drives, but he never opened out. One day there was an agreeable diversion. Brisbane had accidentally met a young scion of the great Adams family, whose yacht had put in at Villefranche, and he asked Pulitzer to let him bring this American aristocrat to lunch. Pulitzer replied

that if he did not mind meeting him, he, Pulitzer, had no objection to receiving him. It should be observed that the aristocratic Adamses were everything that was most Republican, whilst Pulitzer was regarded as a Democrat of the Democrats. It was as if Mr. Ramsay MacDonald were to entertain the Duke of Northumberland.

The young yachtsman duly arrived faultlessly attired, and sparkling with brilliancy. The conversation at table was like a rally at lawn tennis, the ball was never allowed to drop. In course of conversation, Pulitzer was asked whether he knew young Hearst of San Francisco, who had inherited "money to burn" from his avaricious old father, and was now making it fly. One of his hobbies, it appeared, was to go out life-saving in a private lifeboat of his own. He had made a great success with his papers, and had scandalised his relations by his advanced opinions. And then the young man added:

"He tells me he is coming to New York, and is going to make things hum, and he says you will have to look out."

Pulitzer smiled graciously, like an old warrior, and expressed his readiness to meet the threatened foe. But as we sat eating our luncheon and chatting pleasantly we, none of us, I fancy, quite realised all that threat implied. Did Arthur Brisbane, I wonder, have any premonition of what it would mean to him, and did Mr. Pulitzer suspect that his greatest journalistic treasure would, in the course of a short time, desert him and go over to the enemy?

At last my fate was sealed. One day Pulitzer told me that he thought I was a born journalist, and that it would be a pity to make a secretary of me. Would I care to write for the *World*? If I cared to do so he would send me off at once to Turin to report on Kossuth, who was said to be dying. Now Pulitzer was a Hungarian by origin, and cherished the greatest admiration for that patriot.

Next day I was on my way to Turin. At Ventimiglia, where

one changes trains, I found myself in a railway carriage, the sole other occupant of which was a gentleman bearing a strong facial resemblance to my friend, Professor Storojenko. As soon as the train started, this gentleman, speaking French with a strong Italian accent, asked me for permission to eat his lunch, and producing a parcel of tempting-looking sandwiches, offered me some, which I had the self-restraint to refuse. We got into conversation, and he soon elicited from me the object of my journey.

"Would you pardon me if I took a very great liberty? I have not the honour of your acquaintance, but, if you will give me your card, and will permit me to do so, it will give me great pleasure to introduce you to Kossuth's medical attendant, who is an old friend, in fact we were schoolfellows, and I am professor of medicine at the University of Milan."

I venture to submit this episode to the special attention of those people, and they are numerous, who maintain that there is no such thing as luck. For myself, I have had too many similar experiences, and have suffered too many reverses of fortune, not to know that there is such a thing as luck, and that there are two kinds of it, good and bad.

Turin is an eighteenth century town which, at that time at least, had undergone no change. My introduction to Kossuth's medical man enabled me to obtain at once the most authentic information regarding that patriot's condition, but I was amused to be told later by the correspondent of the *Pesther Lloyd*, that if Kossuth had been living in a cultured country, *ein Kultur-Staat*, he would have been kept alive; as though Italy had not an older and superior Kultur to that of, *e.g.*, Hungary.

This same correspondent told me a wonderful story, the truth of which I had no opportunity to verify. When the death of Kossuth was announced the Emperor of Austria graciously telegraphed his consent to the burial of the remains in Hungarian soil, and the two handsome sons of the departed decided

that their mother's body, which was interred in Genoa, should be transferred to Turin, and accompany that of her husband for burial in Hungary. On disinterment and the opening of her coffin it was found that the body had been kept perfectly fresh and that even the flesh-tints had been preserved. This was attributed to the action of a spring which flowed through the cemetery, and also revealed the fact that this spring, whose subterranean course through the cemetery had not been previously discovered, was one of the sources of the water-supply of the town of Genoa!

As soon as the decision of the Emperor was known, Hungarian magnates began to arrive in Turin by the score. The town was crammed with notables among whom the famous General Thurr and his somewhat eccentric son formed picturesque figures.

Although a foreigner I was treated with the greatest courtesy by the Hungarians, and was even allocated a berth on the funeral train which took the bodies of Kossuth and his wife, accompanied by their eldest son, to Budapest. It was a most impressive journey. The funeral procession through the streets of Turin, with the Hungarian magnates in their gorgeous national costumes following the hearse, was in itself a sight never to be forgotten. After the train had crossed the Italian frontier and had got into Austrian territory, it was suddenly side-tracked and kept waiting an unconscionable time for another train coming from the opposite direction, which eventually thundered past us. This, we ascertained, was the special train which was taking the Emperor of Austria to Abbazia to pay his respects to the German Emperor who was staying there. It was a last indignity to Kossuth, and characteristic of the tactlessness of Francis Joseph. When we reached Hungarian soil, our train stopped, and Kossuth's son, who had never set foot in Hungary while his father was in exile, alighted, knelt down with his head bared and kissed the ground, whilst a handful of Hungarian peasants, who had sprung from nowhere, arrived on the scene

in their picturesque dress, and fired a salute from some very ancient muskets. It was whispered that these were survivors of the '48. Our train as it stopped at various stations must have looked very effective, for the carriage in which the coffins reposed was hung with wreaths. The platforms on the stations were occupied by gendarmes armed with rifles, and the public were rigidly excluded, but they managed to throng into the station itself and get a sight of the train, through the buffet and other windows of which they passed wreaths. They persuaded the easy-going gendarmes to hand them to the chief mourner, who invariably made an eloquent speech in Hungarian of which I did not understand a word.

At Budapest we encountered a curious situation. All the police had been removed from the streets, which were kept by the students of the University. Never shall I forget that day, or the interminable speeches of the Hungarian magnates, and the vociferous plaudits of the crowd. Never have I witnessed anything at all comparable.

I will not attempt to describe this beautiful city with its spacious modern avenues and its quaint crooked mediæval little streets, the glorious Danube and the forbidding gloomy castle frowning down upon it from an eminence on the opposite bank. Budapest is one of the most interesting cities of Europe, but I was not destined to enjoy its attractions long, for I found awaiting me a telegram ordering me to proceed at once to Abbazia where the German Emperor was enjoying a brief holiday.

Abbazia was at that time the Austrian Riviera, but was only accessible from the Hungarian port of Fiume, whence a small paddle-steamer conveyed visitors to their destination. There was only one hotel, the Kronprinzessin Stephanie, in which every article of food consumed was brought all the way from Vienna. The place was simply a colony of villas, without roads or shops. The villa occupied by the Emperor was almost on the Adriatic, and had the inevitable verandah on the first floor.

The day after my arrival was Sunday morning and the thing to do was to go to the sea and watch the training-ship, *Moltke*, on which the Emperor was conducting divine service. Presently the captain's gig could be seen coming along, rowed by very non-nautical-looking German sailors, and soon the brilliant company came on shore. They were nearly all giants. Conspicuous among them was the unfortunate Moltke, who became Chief of the General Staff, and the organiser of defeat some twenty years later, whose sole claim to military leadership was, so his detractors averred, the possession of a great name, coupled with a tall figure. The Emperor, who was the last to land, looked almost a pigmy by contrast. All heads were bared and there was a cheer as the dignified figure of the German Emperor, arrayed in undress naval uniform, preceded by his staff, walked along the gravel-path, saluting right and left, and ascended the iron stairs which led to the verandah. His staff went into the house first, and just before reaching the verandah, the Emperor theatrically half-turned towards the crowd watching him, gave them the full benefit of a radiant, triumphant smile, waved his cap to them, and disappeared in the villa. It was like a scene out of some opera, and one half-expected the Emperor to sing something out of *Lohengrin*, or perhaps *Rigoletto*, before making his exit.

Of course it was my duty to hover round and report the Emperor's movements and record the details of his daily life. To see him play lawn-tennis with a number of rather plain-looking ladies of the Court while the Empress sat proudly watching him, was a sight very flattering to my patriotic feelings, for he spoke English throughout the game. Afternoon tea, another British institution, was an important function.

One afternoon I took a little walk in a neighbouring pine forest, which was traversed by a sunken footpath along which there was only room for one person to walk at a time. As I sauntered along meditating over the funny thing American

journalism was, I became aware of a couple walking towards me accompanied by two large Danish mastiffs. The man was dressed in a blue serge suit and was wearing a regulation English straw hat; at a distance he might have passed for an Englishman, but on his coming nearer I noticed that his clothes fitted him ill, and that his collar and tie lacked neatness. The lady behind him was buxom, good-natured-looking, but had "German officer's wife" written all over her, and was dressed with deplorable bad taste. Suddenly it flashed across me that it was the German Emperor and Empress who were approaching me. I had just time to spring on to the raised bank of grass, and stand at attention uncovered, to allow their Imperial Majesties to pass. My jerky jump on one side was apparently so unexpected, that it startled the Emperor, who was visibly shaken and turned paler than usual. He instantly recovered himself however, and assumed an air of angry dignity as he passed me, whilst the Empress, who was following behind, and had taken in the whole situation, gave me a humorous smile and a very very faint approach to a wink.

From Abbazia I was sent to Florence to describe the life of Queen Victoria who was staying at the Villa Fabricotti. Here the King and Queen of Italy arrived. I had last seen King Umberto when as heir to the throne he came to Russia for the wedding of the Duke of Edinburgh. He was then a romantic looking young man with an enormous flaming red moustache, and was dressed in gorgeous uniform. Now he was old, his moustache was white, and he wore a shiny silk hat and an immaculate frock-coat. His appearance was dignified but not distinguished, he might have been taken for a prosperous banker rather than a King. The Queen by his side, however, was as charming as ever, and a very great lady. Not long afterwards King Umberto was laid low by the hand of an assassin, for no apparent reason. I think he must have had some premonition of his approaching fate, for there was an expression of deep

melancholy in his handsome countenance, a tragic look, which haunts me still, as of a man going to his doom.

In Florence I had an unpleasant experience, I ran short of money, and in reply to an urgent telegram for funds was instructed to proceed to Cap Martin where money would be sent me. I was at a loss what to do, and so I went to Cook's Tourist Office and took them into my confidence. They immediately cashed a cheque for me and supplied me with my ticket for Mentone.

The unhappy Empress of Austria was staying at the Cap Martin Hotel, and so was the Empress Eugénie, but the latter was a very different-looking person from the radiant and elegantly dressed enchantress whom I remembered seeing in Paris in the 'sixties. She was still tall and had a commanding figure, but in her appearance and clothes she resembled the old-fashioned wife of some not too prosperous English squire in her country clothes. The Cap Martin Hotel had a very agreeable young Secretary to whom I made myself known one evening.

"I see," he said, "that you smoke the hotel cigars. They are not bad, but rather expensive. As you are a newspaper man, however, I dare say, you appreciate good tobacco, but prefer your cigars cheap. Now the officers of the Empress of Austria's yacht do a little bit of smuggling, and if you like I can let you have a hundred really good ones that are none the worse for not having paid any duty."

Of course I purchased a box, very cheap, and although I have never had the opportunity of thanking the honest Austrian officer for having placed those delicious weeds within my reach, I was nevertheless very grateful to him, more especially as I felt sure that no English naval officer would have laid me under a similar obligation, certainly not an officer of the royal yacht.

The hotel Secretary proved a real treasure. In his position he had become conversant with a great variety of interesting

facts, and some of these he communicated to me quite freely. Thus he told me the true story of the cause of the strained relations between the Emperor and Empress of Austria. It seems that the Empress had years ago suffered in health as a consequence of the infidelity of Francis Joseph and had never forgiven him, her resentment had indeed gone so far that she refused to speak to him. The Secretary told me that they were never known to converse together on the rare occasions when they both stayed at the hotel. Our own Prince and Princess of Wales (Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra) presented a very different picture.

"They were here last year," the Secretary said, "and though I have heard a good many scandals about the Prince of Wales, I had difficulty in believing them when I saw him with the Princess, they were more like a honeymoon couple together, than an old married pair. The Prince especially was so cheery and genial and always laughing and jolly. I have come to think that all those stories are very much exaggerated."

The Emperor of Austria, on the other hand, he said, seemed to cast a gloom round him wherever he went. As for the Empress, she had melancholia. The only diversion that seemed to cause her any real enjoyment was mountaineering. She would start off early in the morning, accompanied by her guides and her Greek secretary, and disappear for the whole day. Her unfortunate experience with her husband had turned her into a complete valetudinarian and she lived only for her health.

The Secretary gave me the full programme of her daily routine, her diet, of which she was very particular, living on practically raw meat, but, what was most valuable and enormously enhanced my reputation in the American press, he gave me also the ingredients of her hair-wash. That was indeed a "scoop."

Having exhausted Cap Martin I was summoned to Paris where Pulitzer had taken a house overlooking the Parc Monceau, and

here it was decided to appoint me foreign editor of the *World* and send me to New York.

June is not the best time of the year for visiting that metropolitan city, for the heat is usually very trying. Moreover, at the time when I was sent, there was a strong wave of anti-British feeling. So strong was this that when I presented myself to the editor, that "gentleman" received me with his back turned towards me, and so great was his loathing of everything and everybody English that he never once deigned to look at me, to say nothing of shaking hands with me, during the whole period of my service under him.

The *World* building was then one of the tallest, if not the tallest building in New York, it was let out in offices and was surmounted by a dome (consisting of several storeys) and it was in this dome that the *World* was printed. One of the local comic papers had published a caricature of Mr. Joseph Pulitzer, in which he was depicted as a parrot in a cage, the cage being a reproduction of the *World* building dome, the rather prominent features of Mr. Pulitzer lending themselves to such treatment.

All the members of the staff did not manifest the same hostility to me as the editor, indeed they were mostly good fellows, and showed me real kindness and cameraderie, in spite of my "English accent."

New York had vastly changed since I last saw it. No longer did it possess an English appearance, but rather did its huge buildings remind me of Berlin. The people too were different. The emaciated long thin type, with goatee beard and long narrow face, had disappeared. In place of the traditional Uncle Sam, so like the portraits of Abraham Lincoln, one met a race of giants, bullet-headed, stout, self-indulgent-looking and self-assertive. These also reminded me of Berlin, although they were much more neatly dressed than Germans. The most remarkable were the women; the poorest shop-girl had a certain elegance and grace about her which to my mind was far superior

to the indisputable *chic* of the French women. Every American woman seemed to be a born queen, and carried herself with real dignity. Another thing that struck me very much was the surprising assimilative power which America seemed to possess. Although New York is a cosmopolitan city one never seemed to meet foreigners there. Immigrants arrived at the Battery unable to speak any language but their own, and yet by the time they had got to Central Park they were American citizens, full fledged, with the American accent and all complete. One never heard broken English spoken. The American intonation seemed to be easy to acquire, and once acquired, could never be shaken off. America is truly a marvellous country; it absorbs all nationalities, and covers them with a sort of harmonising lacquer. At the *New York World* office we had a Chinese reporter, he was dressed as an American, talked like an American, and even looked like one.

One thing I very soon discovered, and that was that in spite of its democratic institutions, America was a far less democratic country than are the effete nations of moribund Europe. America is essentially a plutocratic country, and the American millionaire has as little regard for the law as was possessed by the high-placed aristocrat of pre-revolutionary autocratic Russia.

In Central Park, for instance, the drives of the rich are preserved from the vulgar gaze of the poor who have to keep to the foot-paths, which are so arranged as not to border the drives. Wishing to view the carriages and horses, I, one day, innocently transgressed the unwritten law, and walked along the side of one of the drives, but I was promptly reproved by a vigilant policeman of obvious Irish origin, who shouted to me:

"You ought to have more sense than to walk here."

I instantly retreated, apologising profusely, and explaining that I had been under the misapprehension of believing myself in a free country. I speedily discovered that in her amusements also New York does not cater for the poor.

Arthur Brisbane was the shining light of American journalism in those days, and just about the time of my arrival had made himself famous by interviewing an American statesman rejoicing under the sobriquet of Silver-Dollar Smith, who had sought refuge in a Turkish bath (whither the relentless Brisbane had pursued him), torturing him with questions. In vain did the harassed victim endeavour to escape by a plunge, for as he came out at the other end, there stood awaiting him, like an inevitable fate, the ubiquitous interviewer. This went on for some time, until at last the defeated Silver-Dollar Smith, after taking more plunges and spluttering about helplessly, had been tortured into confessing his opinions. New York laughed loud and long at this brilliant piece of reporting, which, if I remember rightly, took up fully six columns of the *World*.

As I have said, my colleagues were very good fellows, they were simple unsophisticated, good-humoured vagabonds, living from hand to mouth and knowing from experience that in this transitory world there is no security of tenure and that the best of us are subject to being "fired," without rhyme or reason. Thus, I was told that the late Gordon Bennett, arriving one day unexpectedly from Europe at the *New York Herald* office, as he was in the habit of doing, and walking over the premises, summoned the editor and asked him who that new young man was with his hair parted on one side. The editor told him he was a very brilliant and very steady young fellow, who was doing excellent work.

"Well," said Gordon Bennett, "I don't like the way he wears his hair. Fire him."

There is a savour of Oriental despotism about this Occidental plutocrat.

One of my colleagues was a man called Frank White, a remarkably brilliant journalist whom I had known in London. He wanted to show me the *Quartier Latin* of New York.

"Your *Quartier Latin*!" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes," he said, "the place where our artists live."

"You don't mean to say you have artists in New York?" I asked, feeling already a world of pity, at the bottom of my heart, for the misery which these poor people must be suffering in their incongruous surroundings.

"Of course we have artists, and very fine ones," he replied proudly. "You should see our picture galleries."

"Well, I went to your Metropolitan Gallery in Central Park and didn't think much of the pictures there."

"I guess not. They were mostly purchased abroad!"

New York is an extraordinarily interesting town for millionaires, for the humble wage-earner life there is somewhat sordid. As for me, I had to come on duty at seven in the evening and did not leave until three in the morning, no Sundays, no holidays. I was not sorry therefore when, after five months, I was appointed Paris correspondent and told to report myself to Mr. Ballard Smith in London, under whose orders I was to be.

On the passage home I met a party of English financiers, one of whom told me that they had been over to assist in the formation of the celebrated Steel Trust associated with the names of Carnegie and Schwab. When I arrived in London I cabled this intelligance to New York, and the *World* was thus the first paper to publish the news.

Mr. Ballard Smith was very much annoyed by my appointment because, so he told me, it upset his plans. He had proposed to emulate Sir Boyle Roche's famous bird and be in two places at once, in other words he had intended to "cover" both Paris and London himself. I later discovered that he had a very able and efficient understudy, who subsequently succeeded him, so that his idea was perhaps not quite so preposterous as it seemed. However, he gave me clearly to understand that I must count with his active hostility.

On my arrival in Paris I immediately proceeded to call on my old friends, and first among these on a gentleman who held

a responsible position at the Quai d'Orsay and to whom I now presented myself in my new capacity of an American journalist. While I was with him a card was brought in, on looking at which he exclaimed:

"Don't go, you must see this man. He is our Consul-General at Seoul in Corea, he is a Gascon of the Gascons and will amuse you very much."

The gentleman was duly ushered in, and I was introduced to him as an American newspaper correspondent. A typical expansive Frenchman with a certain floridness of expression, he amused me very much when he began to unfold the plot that was being hatched against the British Empire. He concluded, with a glorious wave of the hand:

" Vous verrez, au bout de quelques ans il n'y aura plus d'Angleterre."

If there had not been a Cabinet crisis in France, a general election and change of government shortly afterwards, things would have been very different, for France had been drawn into the meshes of German diplomacy through M. Herbette and M. Hanotaux, and in Russia Prince Lobanoff-Rostovsky was working to the same end. That statesman died suddenly of heart disease a little later.

Another old friend, whom I met in Paris, was that very original dancer, Miss Loie Fuller. I had known her in London where she had introduced me to the incomparable Yvette Gilbert, disconsolate and cast down at the reception accorded her by the British press and her quite unaccustomed respectability. *"On me trouve morale!"* she complained to me with pathetic distress.

I had been able to do a good turn to Loie Fuller, who was then going to Brussels, by writing about her to one of the King's secretaries whom I knew, and who arranged for her to give a private performance before the Queen of the Belgians and generally made her quite the fashion. Loie Fuller was

bursting with gratitude, insisted on presenting me to Ambroise Thomas, of *Mignon* fame, and generally paid me back with interest for the little service I had rendered her.

It was at this time that Paris was visited by an epidemic of spy-mania more serious than any she had ever experienced before. The American Naval Attaché had been accused of selling plans of battle-ships to the Italians, and though he indignantly denied having done anything of the kind, his government thought it more prudent to withdraw him. Then there was the famous Dreyfus case. Cavaignac had most chivalrously championed his cause, and on being appointed Minister of War, told me personally that one of the first tasks he would set himself to do on entering on his duties would be to bring the *affaire* Dreyfus into the open, examine it, and vindicate the man of whose innocence he was convinced. He did study the *dossier* and then proclaimed that for the honour of France the case could not be re-opened, and that there were things in the *dossier* that could not be disclosed.

My own views regarding that mysterious affair were embodied in a letter which I sent to the *Pall Mall Gazette* a few years later, it was published on the 24th August, 1899, to be exact.

As has been pointed out by one of the Special Correspondents [I said], even if Esterhazy is proved to have written the *bordereau*, that would not establish the innocence of Dreyfus! And if it should be proved that Esterhazy did not write it, that would not prove Dreyfus to be guilty. No witness has stated how the discovery that there was a traitor at the French War Office was made. The generals all say the treachery was discovered through the *bordereau*, yet that *bordereau* has now been pronounced a forgery, and all the documents in it are also declared to be forgeries. Why were these forgeries committed? The Paris correspondent of *The Times* says General Mercier wanted to be made President and thought he could be floated in on the crest of the wave of Anti-Semitism. But that does not explain the equivocations of General de Boisdeffre, General Gonse, and a host of others. Was it to shield Major Henry? He was sacrificed as soon as he became inconvenient. . . . So far the

foreign powers accused of bribing French officers are Germany, Austria, Italy, and, less definitely, England. The military attachés of these powers have all denied having had any dealings with Dreyfus. But no suspicion has been cast on Russia. Nevertheless Russia is the one country most interested in keeping herself well informed of the military efficiency or weakness of her ally. In 1894, when Dreyfus was accused, Baron Mohrenheim was Russian ambassador in Paris. He spent much secret service money and employed numbers of spies of various nationalities. After the Dreyfus affair Baron Mohrenheim asked to be recalled. His request was not granted. When the Dreyfus case was reopened Baron Mohrenheim again asked to be recalled, and he was finally retired. The present court-martial was heralded by the recall of Baron Fredericks, the Russian military attaché. . . . Why was Dreyfus selected as the victim? People say, because he was a Jew. But are there not more Jews in the Artillery than Dreyfus? No! there was a certain air of probability about the guilt of Dreyfus (if Russia was the bribing country) which no doubt served to deceive M. Casimir-Perier. Dreyfus bears the same name as, and is related to, the firm of Dreyfus Brothers, the great grain merchants of Southern Russia. . . .

This letter was never answered.

The autumn of 1894 was remarkably fine and warm. Down to the end of November people used to sit on the *terraces* of the *cafés* on the boulevards sipping their drinks in the open air. Well do I remember one such afternoon when I was having my coffee in this way. Suddenly I heard a cry which upset my composure. The newspaper vendors were crying the evening editions of their papers: *Mort de l'empereur de la Russie.* I immediately jumped into a cab and drove to the Russian Embassy to verify the news. It was but too true. On the table in the chancery lay a paper containing the directions for the necessary celebrations at the Russian Church in Paris and other similar particulars in Russian. These I studied whilst I waited, and was thus able to cable full details to New York.

My duties included shadowing the movements of American notabilities. This was my most arduous task, for these people

were very elusive, besides I was totally ignorant of their importance. I am afraid I "fell down" very badly over this. Of course I had to haunt the various American exchanges, which abound in Paris, in pursuance of this duty, and one day while I was prosecuting my inquiries I was accosted by a typical American who asked me who I was and where I came from. I told him I was an Englishman.

"Sir," he said, "my ancestors fought yours at Bunker's Hill, and blood is thicker than water, you can't wash it out."

"That is all nonsense," I replied; "you Americans pretend to hate us, but I have often been over there and I know that in your heart of hearts you have a sneaking regard for us, and if we were ever to be in trouble you would come and help us!"

The American was astonished and moved, he stretched out his open hand and by way of answer only said: "Put it there."

But I little knew that my words were to come true within a few years.

One day I got a wire from Ballard Smith to the effect that he was going to New York and left me in charge of Europe. Here was a pretty how d'you do! So far all those who have tried to take charge of Europe have come to grief, and I was to prove no exception to the rule, for a couple of weeks later I received an intimation that I was "fired." Ballard Smith, I subsequently learned, profiting by the absence of Pulitzer on some Pacific island, had told the editor that he must choose between me and him, and of course the editor did not hesitate. Besides he was quite right, as I have already said, I was not suited to the job, because I did not know who was who in America and did not sufficiently understand that the American public attached more importance to the movements of Mr. Smith of Oklahoma, of whom I had never heard, than they did, let us say, to the resignation of M. Casimir-Perier or the death of Alexander III. of Russia.

CHAPTER XIV

ARMENIA AND THE NEAR EAST

SITTING one day at the Savage Club on my return from Paris, smoking after lunch, and reflecting on my fate, which had condemned me to a nomadic and proletarian life, and feeling generally very discontented and despondent, ripe in fact for Bolshevism (which had not then been invented), I was suddenly accosted by Harvey Thomas, who was managing the *Daily Graphic* for his father.

"Why sit you here all the day idle?" he irreverently inquired.

"Because no man hath hired me," I answered.

"Will you go to Armenia for us?"

Of course I agreed at once, and in a few days I was already on my way. The Turks had been massacring the Armenians with particular energy in the district of Van and the British press was up in arms about it. I have republished my articles in book form under the title of *Round about Armenia*, consequently I shall spare my readers the harrowing details. These articles were printed in the *Daily Graphic* under the caption of *The Red Spot in Armenia*, and so I, who used to be familiarly called "Famine Russia," was later given, as a nickname, this lurid description.

On my journey by Orient Express across Europe I found myself accidentally in the company of a son of an old friend; this was no less a person than the famous Billie Barlow of the Royal Artillery, better known as "Bucking Bill of Benares." His grandfather had been one of the greatest mathematicians of his time, and his father, a President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, had rebuilt the Tay Bridge. Billie Barlow had

inherited the mathematical talents of his progenitors and was considered one of the finest artillery officers in H.M. service. He was also a very gallant soldier who had fought with distinction in the Burmese War. But these merits had nothing to do with his popularity, they paled by the side of his wonderful proficiency as a conjuror with cards and his social qualities generally. A more genial companion could not be imagined. He was a favourite with the dear old Duke of Cambridge, and wherever his name was mentioned among soldiers it called forth beaming smiles, for he had great convivial gifts, and was an incomparable host. To hear him sing the Artillery toast was a liberal education in geniality. He made me learn it; these are the words:

"I friend, charge thee, friend, as my friend charged me, that thou, friend, drink to thy friend, as my friend drank to me; and the more we drink together the merrier we shall be!"

Billie Barlow had got leave and was going to Egypt for a holiday, but when he heard where I was bound for he insisted on accompanying me. Now Billie Barlow was a delightful companion, but he had one great fault, he suffered from insomnia and used to go to bed in the small hours of the morning only to get up again at five or six. This was an inconvenient habit, but was so amply compensated for by his many other qualities that I gladly accepted his offer. On the whole I did not regret doing so.

When the train reached Sofia I decided to break my journey and spend a few days in the capital of Bulgaria, while Major Barlow determined to go on and "make a base" for me at Constantinople.

Sofia, which was little better than a village then, had already been deprived of Prince Alexander, and was saddled with the very Byzantine Prince Ferdinand, who looked at that time exactly like the present-day portraits of Trotsky. Stambouloff was in retirement, and a Dr. Stoiloff was Prime Minister.

Stambouloff, who had been educated in Odessa, spoke Russian like a native, whilst Stoiloff, who had been brought up at the American mission in Constantinople, was more fluent in English.

The streets of Sofia, like those of another place, were paved with good intentions and nothing else. Cafés abounded, and I was surprised at the quantities of newspapers and revolvers on sale, these seemed to be the principle objects of merchandise. The Bulgarians struck me as a serious people, there were no signs of frivolity, no theatres or amusements. Mr. Bourchier, who was regarded as the father of the people, and ought to have been their ruler, though he probably exercised more influence in his capacity as *The Times* correspondent, was a great figure. Our diplomatic agent, Sir Arthur Nicolson,[1] advised me to see this benevolent uncrowned King, whom all Bulgarians, of whatever party (and as politics was their only recreation their parties were numerous), profoundly revered and absolutely trusted. He used to spend most of his time tramping the Balkans, and living amongst the peasantry, but it so happened that he was in the capital on the occasion of my visit. He was a splendid specimen of the product of our public schools, and, though he had been Assistant Master at Eton for many years, he had not acquired the Eton stoop, but was as straight as a poplar, a fine athletic figure, without an ounce of superfluous flesh. His clear blue eyes were keen but gentle, he was tall and his curly fair hair was already turning from gold to silver. He told me more about Bulgaria and its people in a few minutes' conversation than could have been obtained by hours of study, and he was, moreover, so exquisitely courteous. He had the grand manner, so rare to-day, of which the present Lord Balfour is one of the few remaining possessors.

He strongly urged my calling on Prince Ferdinand, who loved receiving journalists, but the Prince had got wind of my having, as in duty bound, called on Sir Arthur Nicolson, who had

[1] Now Lord Carnock.

complained to me, with some amusement, that he was in quarantine, because his boys had chicken-pox, and Prince Ferdinand was mortally afraid of all infectious diseases, especially on account of his little son and heir, Prince Boris, not yet quite twelve months old. Prince Ferdinand therefore deputed his secretary to receive me and make his excuses. This secretary was the husband of the Prince's *maîtresse en titre*, a Bulgarian lady, who, to the great scandal of the virtuous Bulgarian people, had been made lady of the bed-chamber and mistress of the robes to the Prince's long-suffering heroic consort, a Princess more beautiful in character than appearance.

My interview with Prince Ferdinand's secretary was not very fruitful of information, nor was that with Dr. Stoiloff, the Prime Minister, who spoke English. Dr. Stoiloff was President of a Council of Ministers composed principally of himself, for he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, and Finance.

Very different was the reception accorded me by Stambouloff, who was living in hourly expectation of assassination, and had turned his little low-lying house into a sort of fortress. I had some difficulty in gaining admission, the door was locked and barred, and when, at last, it was opened, the servant took my card and locked and barred the door again and kept me standing outside of it until permission was granted to admit me. Stambouloff received me in his very Russian-looking study which was a veritable armoury, for the walls, instead of books, were lined with rifles and swords. Stambuloff himself was rather short than tall, very powerful but inclined to be stout. His eyes were terrible and wolfish, but what struck me most about him was his wrists. I had only once before seen wrists like his, and they were those of a murderer. Looking at him I could quite believe the stories I had heard of his cruelty, of his personally superintending the tortures of his victims, and gloating over them. His face was pale and soft, and plump about the cheeks, and was disfigured by his straight, black, bushy eye-

brows. His dark eyes, which were small, leaden and dead in repose, could, on occasion, flash out, bright and glowing, full of life, passion and genius. His lofty bald forehead and his small tufty beard gave his head an egg-like appearance which reminded me of the portraits of Bacon, Shakespeare's reputed "ghost."

At first he was rather shy and distant, but when he found I could speak Russian he warmed up and became quite childishly garrulous and communicative. He was very entertaining and had a certain dry mordant wit which gave his stories a peculiar savour.

For instance, in illustration of the primitive virtue of the Bulgarian people, he related an episode which strongly brought out their unsophisticated mentality, but which I cannot hope to retail as he told it. Some years ago, when Prince Ferdinand was unsuccessfully scouring the courts of Europe for a consort, there arrived in Sofia the divorced wife (or widow, I do not remember which) of a Russian colonel. She was a Georgian Princess in her own right, of ancient lineage, still a young woman, and possessed of children. She thought she would make a very suitable wife to Prince Ferdinand, and had come to press her candidature personally, and to enlist the suffrages of the Bulgarian people. Beginning with the cabinet, she made herself very amiable to the Ministers, and invited them individually to call on, and see, her, amongst others the Minister of Agriculture, who was of peasant parentage and quite unspoilt by the world. A fine, handsome young man, he was graciously entertained by the Russian lady, who exercised her considerable powers of fascination to win him over to her cause. As he rose to take his leave she even pressed him to stay to supper, but at this proposal the young man, his virtue now thoroughly alarmed, blushed crimson and, excusing himself on the score of being a married man, precipitately took his departure.

As Stambouloff told this story, his eyes twinkled with fun.

and he broke out into a delightful innocent laugh, quite *bon enfant*, with nothing of the tyrant about him.

In this genial mood he told me a number of highly interesting things, the most remarkable of which was the secret history of the abdication of Prince Alexander of Battenberg. It will be remembered that when this Prince consulted Bismarck as to whether he should accept the honour which had been offered him of ruling Bulgaria, that cynical statesman replied:

"Why not? It will at least be a pleasant reminiscence for you in the future."

But why was the experience so brief? It is generally believed that Prince Alexander abdicated because the Emperor Alexander III. who disliked him personally, refused him his support. But this, Stambouloff assured me, was only a pretext. The real reason was very different. Prince Alexander, so Stambouloff averred, was very popular with the Bulgarian people, for he was a great gentleman, and, unlike his successor, respected their womankind, but there existed great jealousy of him in military circles. After his victory over the Serbs, he was always spoken of as the hero of Slivnitza, and this annoyed the Bulgarian army leaders. If Prince Alexander had not been a professional soldier, trained in Prussian and not Russian traditions, the case might have been different.

On the night, after the battle of Slivnitza, Stambouloff told me, he went the rounds with Prince Alexander and came upon a group of officers, who did not see him approach, and were disputing loudly.

"What does the Prince know about tactics and strategy? I have studied at the St. Petersburg Military College and have more knowledge of warfare in my little finger than that silly Prince has in his whole body."

The officers were Captain Petrov, the Adjutant-General of the Forces, and Chief of the Staff, and Captain Bendereff, who had commanded the troops on the field of battle, besides several

others. It may be remembered that all the superior officers, who were Russians, had been withdrawn by the Emperor, consequently the Bulgarian army was commanded by captains.

Prince Alexander was furious. He was himself a very young man and jealous of his professional military reputation, neither Bendereff nor Petrov was promoted after the war, and these slighted military geniuses vowed vengeance and ultimately formed a conspiracy and kidnapped the Prince. But the Prince's popularity was so great that he was restored by a counter-revolution, returned to Sofia and wrote his famous telegram to Alexander III. Why did he do this? Stambouloff explained to me that in the past the Prince had not shown such extraordinary consideration for the wishes of Russia as to justify his present attitude: what he really wanted was an excuse for abdicating. He had a very shrewd idea of the kind of answer Alexander III. would send him, and he courted it, for he was disillusioned in Bulgaria, not in its people, but in its troops. For a soldier, with his strong sense of discipline, and his German sentiment of *esprit de corps* and loyalty to one's comrades, to think that the men whom he had regarded as brothers in arms, who had fought with him against a common foe, should have conspired against him was not merely repugnant, it was disgusting, it gave him a revulsion of feeling. As a soldier he could never again feel like a comrade towards Bulgarian officers. Some people may argue that after all, it was his own jealousy of his subordinates which was to blame, and that to expect loyalty from them after the treatment they had experienced was perhaps a little *naïve*. People arguing like that forget that Prince Alexander was a German officer, and had the mentality of the German officer, that inability to see the other side of a question which so markedly distinguished the German military mind during the war.

Before leaving Stambouloff, I was assured by him that he felt certain that his doom was sealed, and that sooner or later he

would be assassinated. That fateful foreboding was only too speedily justified; he was shot while out driving the following July.

Having exhausted Sofia I resumed my journey to Constantinople in a rather chastened and disappointed mood, for I had conceived a theory that Turkey was approaching her dissolution. Whenever she had massacred her Giaour subjects in a wholesale manner she had generally lost a province, and I believed, from rumours that had reached me, that a general movement was on foot for simultaneous risings, east and west. If anything of the kind had been planned, my visit to Sofia convinced me that it was not likely to mature.

At Sofia, I must not omit to mention, I had the good fortune to see a review of troops. It was a most impressive sight. The men were all of magnificent physique and splendidly trained. As they marched past the tall though unathletic figure of Prince Ferdinand, they looked like an army of giants. I have never seen finer or more workmanlike looking troops.

On the way to Constantinople a rather ludicrous incident occurred. There was a French engineer on the train who possessed a camera and had been taking photographs. When we reached the Turkish frontier the Custom-House officials were puzzled about his negatives and, after careful examination, decided on confiscating them. The state of mind of the Frenchman was pitiable. He told me he did not so much regret the confiscation as fear that the negatives might suffer from exposure.

At Constantinople I found Major Barlow had engaged a room for me at one of the hotels. The Péra Palace Hotel did not yet exist. He had made preparations for our journey. He had, incidentally, also made friends with all the pariah dogs who still infested the streets.

Oscar Wilde, on a memorable occasion, confessed that he was disappointed with the Atlantic, which is no respecter of persons, and I must admit that I was equally disappointed with Constantinople, though not for a similar reason. Stamboul is a fine and

imposing town, but Péra, where the Europeans are congregated, was then at least simply a sordid and disgustingly insalubrious hole. Of course the view of the Golden Horn from my hotel window was beautiful, but the town itself presented no objects of interest, it consisted of mean streets and ramshackle houses.

Sir Philip Currie was our Ambassador then and the Chief Dragoman was Mr., later Sir, Adam Block. Sir Philip Currie was a very handsome old gentleman, full of vitality, but courtly and dignified withal. He commiserated the hardships I was bound to encounter on my mission, and rather dissuaded me from attempting to penetrate the interior. He seemed to think that I should be able to obtain all the news I needed in Constantinople. I did not feel at all anxious to prolong my stay in that fever-laden capital, but I did want to discover the rationale of the Armenian massacres. Everybody knew that atrocities had been perpetrated on a huge scale, but nobody seemed to trouble about the cause. To my mind it was unreasonable to suppose that the Sultan, who was credited with a crafty Machiavellian mind, should have simply indulged a whim, and ordered the massacre of the Armenian population of certain districts to vary the monotony of his life, there must have been a *raison d'état*, but to discover this nobody seemed disposed to assist me. The poor innocent, helpless Armenian peasants had been massacred, that was enough, any attempt to find out the reason for this extraordinary measure was actually resented. I saw the famous *Daily News* correspondent, who was subsequently knighted, and had made a special study of the Armenian question, but even he, either could not, or did not wish to throw any light on the question. Now I knew perfectly well that the Armenians had previously held almost a privileged position in Turkey. This has been recently confirmed by Djemal Pasha in his *Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman* 1913-1919.

Sixty years ago, or, to speak more accurately, until ten years before the Russo-Turkish War . . . there was no question what-

ever of any religious conflict between the two races. . . . Throughout the Turkish Empire, the Armenians and Turks lived together in such harmony that Ottoman histories of the period do not even mention such a thing as an Armenian question. In family affairs there was no limit to Turco-Armenian friendship. When a Turk left his village in Asia Minor for some business journey, he left his Armenian neighbours in full charge of his family, honours, and rights, and the Armenians on their side showed equal confidence in their Turkish neighbours. . . . The magnanimity and friendship shown the Armenians won their gratitude. The result was that for five hundred years there was no sort of conflict between the two peoples.

He then proceeds to show that the Armenians were stirred up by Russia and adds that the Turks "naturally regarded Armenia, so to speak, as a snake let loose by Russia against them."

In January 1880 [he concludes], as a result of continuous pressure by Russia, and in view of the various Armenian revolts, the States of Europe issued a note on the subject of Armenian reforms to the Sublime Porte. It was just then that the Bulgarians were trying to annex Eastern Rumelia. Every time the Government had to settle some very important domestic or foreign problem the Russians brought up the Armenian question again. Abdul Hamid II. settled the matter by giving way on certain points. The Armenian troubles reached their height in the years 1894–96, and there were risings more or less everywhere. The Armenian disorders resulted in such intense hatreds between the three nations which had lived peacefully side by side for five or six hundred years that they were ready to fall upon one another and stain the soil of Anatolia and even Constantinople itself with their blood.

This is obviously an *ex parte* statement, nevertheless it is on the whole not so very far from the truth. It does not, however, explain the specific reason for the Sassun massacres of 1894 nor does it give a correct picture of the attitude of Russia, as we shall presently see.

Major Barlow and I decided to go to Trebizond by steamer

and from thence proceed to Erzerum. To our great surprise we experienced no difficulty in getting our *tesskeres*, or travelling permits, for that town, and so set off with confidence.

The trip through the Bosphorus, between Asia and Europe, and along the shores of the Black Sea in an Austrian Lloyd steamer, which took three days, was delightful. But at Trebizond our troubles began. On landing we had to give up our *tesskeres* and they were not returned; the English Consul, Mr. Longworth, did his utmost for us, but explained that nobody was allowed to go to Erzerum. Dr. Dillon had indeed got there, but he had ridden over from Kars.

Trebizond is a beautifully situated town which, in the hands of a progressive race, might easily develop into a sort of Monte Carlo, and rival Livadia. The better-class houses lie dotted about on the hills, and behind these one can see the snow-capped mountains. The climate is perfect. Being under Turkish rule it is, of course, little better than a Slough of Despond. There is absolutely nothing to do, and the various consulates represent the only society. These received each other on various days in the week, and to them our arrival was a perfect godsend. Major Barlow with his card tricks was especially appreciated. We had to call on each of the consuls and these returned our visit. As no strangers were in the habit of visiting the port, our arrival was most welcome, and each consul as he paid me his visit proceeded to unburden himself of all the scandal he knew concerning all the other consuls which he had been compelled to keep to himself for so long. It was all very amusing. Among my callers was an Armenian revolutionary who was introduced in a suitably mysterious manner, who strongly advised me to abandon my projected visit to Erzerum, where, he said, I would learn nothing, but to proceed to Tiflis, which city was full of refugees. I decided to follow his advice and endeavour to work my way from thence to the distressed districts. Major Barlow could not accompany me to Russia

without special permission from the War Office, so I had to part company with him, and leave him in the *opéra-bouffe* hotel where we were charged famine prices by the Greek proprietor who, I subsequently learned, was assassinated a year later. I am afraid I did not feel that he had deserved a better fate.

The journey from Trebizond to Batoum is a pleasant one, and the arrival at Batoum made me feel like passing from barbarism into civilisation, for, although the Russians were somewhat backward and the Georgians, in their picturesque costumes, did not look like Europeans, the place itself was habitable and had an excellent hotel and restaurant, a fine drive along the sea-front faintly reminiscent of the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, and plenty of business.

On the train, a Russian officer got into conversation with me. He turned out to be an aide-de-camp of General Kuropatkin's who was on his way to Central Asia, and he was very inquisitive. I thought the simplest and best plan was to take him into my confidence, and told him I wanted to work my way into Armenia across the Russian frontier. To my surprise he discouraged me very earnestly from carrying out my project, and assured me the Russian Government would not permit me to proceed. In any case, he strongly advised me to call on the Governor-General, without whose sanction it would be impossible for me to carry out my intentions. At Tiflis he recommended me to stay at the hotel frequented by the Russian officers, and on the day after our arrival, at lunch time, he introduced me to them. They were as nice a lot of fellows as one could possibly wish to meet, and immediately invited me to their table. The two most interesting were General Prince Bariatinsky, whose nephew subsequently married the well-known actress, Lydia Yavorska, and who commanded the rifle division, and a certain Colonel, afterwards General, Vassiltchikoff, who commanded the Cossacks.

Prince Bariatinsky was charming, very tall and well-preserved, he had lived every hour of his life. Once, he told me, he carried despatches to Queen Victoria, who was then at Osborne, and was made honorary member of the mess of the Highlanders stationed on the Isle of Wight; he said he stood it out for three days, when the Scotch whisky defeated him and he had to bolt. This was indeed a compliment.

Vassiltchikoff wore a grey beard and was a man of great refinement, but very wild and quite impervious to fear. He it was who had captured Batoum at the head of his regiment in the Russo-Turkish war, for which foolhardy escapade he was severely reprimanded. For a wager he had made several of his Cossacks, himself amongst them, ride up the broad flight of steps leading to the roof-verandah on the top of the Baku Club; for this he was dismissed from his Baku command. He was a delightful companion and a great gentleman, however.

With these pleasant companions I spent a very happy time. One of them had taken part in the Penjdeh incident, and was very much amused at the way his men, who could not speak a word of English, fraternised with the British Tommies, who were equally ignorant of Russian, during the delimitation of the Afghan frontier. The Russians took a great fancy to our men and they got on famously together.

The Governor-General of the Caucasus, when I paid him my official visit, which the aide-de-camp of General Kuropatkin arranged for me, was extremely gracious and charming as only high Russian officials of the old régime knew how to be. He expressed his profound regret at his inability to allow me to proceed to Erivan and Etchmiadzin, as I had wished, and explained that he must wait for instructions from St. Petersburg by telegraph; this, he was afraid, would take some weeks, owing to a break-down of the wires.

"In the meantime," he added with an engaging wave of the hand, "you will remain our guest a little longer."

There was an air of hospitality about the way he said these words which almost made me feel under an obligation to him, in spite of the fact that it was as a paying guest that I had to stay.

However, my time was not wasted. By singular good fortune I came across a party of Armenian peasant refugees from Sassun who gave me a full and detailed account of the massacre, which I immediately dispatched to London and which appeared simultaneously with the account published in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily News*. There was an amusing incident connected with the despatches in the *Daily Telegraph*. The distinguished correspondent of that paper dated his communications from Sassun itself, if I remember rightly, or from the neighbouring Bitlis, and Sir Ashmead Bartlett got up in the House of Commons and drew the attention of the Honourable Members to the fact that these despatches could not possibly have got through from these remote places in the time. Correspondents, even the most experienced, are exposed to these little *contretemps* when their sub-editors are a little too zealous.

I made the acquaintance of numerous Armenians and had an interesting interview with the venerable Catholikos who had just returned from a visit to the Emperor, whom he had begged to intercede for his flock. The Catholikos was seventy-five years of age, his patriarchal beard and imposing robes gave him a splendid appearance. In spite of his great age he was very vigorous and still preferred travelling on horse-back. Over six foot three in stature, he had fire in his eye, the mouth of an orator and the aquiline nose of a warrior. His white flowing beard had still many streaks of gold in it. His demeanour was of a majestic simplicity. As I did not understand Armenian I got the editor of an Armenian paper to act as interpreter, there was however a peculiar fascination in the musical cadence of his voice and in listening to his sonorous phrases. At the close of our interview, during which he stated that he was primarily

the loyal subject of the Emperor of Russia to whose authority he must submit, he bestowed his benediction on Queen Victoria, the friend of the poor and oppressed, and on the English people who had done so much for Armenia.

Another very interesting worthy whose acquaintance I made in Tiflis was Dr. Radde, the curator of the museum, a genial and modest German *Gelehrter* of the old school, who had introduced the latest and most modern methods in the Tiflis museum which presented a complete object lesson of the flora and fauna of the Caucasus. I wonder whether the Bolsheviks have respected that valuable collection.

In due time the Governor-General sent me one of his high officials to inform me that his government had refused me permission to proceed to Turkish Armenia, or even to Erivan. I therefore decided to try to work my way to the scene of the atrocities via Persia, especially as no objection was raised to my visiting Baku.

The Persian Consul-General, Mirza Reeza Khan, the same who had been so infatuated with the American prima donna, Miss Nikita, was with difficulty persuaded to *visé* my passport for Persia. This formality accomplished, I proceeded to Baku.

In the train I found one of the occupants of my compartment to be a quaint-looking gentleman of an expansive disposition, who soon entered into conversation. He was returning from St. Petersburg, whither he had gone as a member of one of the deputations of nobles to do homage to the new Emperor Nicholas II.

As the story of the reception of these deputations has become a matter of history I think this gentleman's unbiased account presents some features of interest.

The programme of the reception had been carefully prepared. A speech by the Emperor was not included. The deputations assembled in the St. George's Hall at the Winter Palace, and each deputation from a district was to be received separately

by the Emperor and Empress in an adjoining room. But quite unexpectedly, whilst the deputations were waiting, Count Vorontzoff-Dashkov, the Minister of the Court, announced that His Imperial Majesty desired to address them in a body before receiving them separately. This departure from the programme excited much curiosity. Presently two sentries took up their position at the Imperial doorway, then the officers of the Court arrived. A long wait ensued. Messengers came and went. There were hurried consultations, as though something had gone wrong. Then it was announced that the Emperor had changed his mind. The sentries were withdrawn. After a lapse of about half an hour the large folding doors of the Imperial doorway were suddenly thrown open and the Emperor emerged. In a clear ringing voice he made the famous speech warning his hearers to banish all foolish day-dreams, turned on his heels and left. It was all over in a few minutes. Everybody present felt himself individually insulted as though he had received a box on the ear. The nobles of Russia were in no way associated with the loyal address of the Zemstvo or County Council of Tver, which, being a covert petition for a constitution, had caused considerable sensation. The nobles had had nothing to do with this document. They were assembled from all parts of the empire to do homage to their new Emperor. They were dumbfounded. It was thought that the Emperor himself had recognised his mistake, for his countenance changed during the speech, and subsequently, when the deputations were separately received, he seemed, by his particularly cordial, conciliatory and even apologetic manner, to wish to atone for his strange behaviour.

My informant had an uncle at court, and from him he learned what had happened. It appears that before the meeting M. Pobedonostzev (Procureur of the Holy Synod) and M. Durnovo (Minister of the Interior) presented the Emperor with the text of this speech and urged him to read it out. After some hesita-

tion he yielded, and Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff consequently announced his intention of speaking. But the Grand-Duke Constantine, having got wind of this proposed speech, succeeded in dissuading him from delivering it. The sentries were therefore withdrawn. MM. Durnovo and Pobedonostzev returned to the charge, however, insistent, and even threatened to resign, so he finally and impulsively yielded.

This little episode throws an instructive light on the methods by which Nicholas II. governed.

A strange spectacle awaits the traveller just before arriving at Baku. Out in front of him lies stretched a vast sandy desert, beyond it is the sea, no habitations are in sight, the train appears to be running straight into the sea, until the discovery is made that the expanse of sand is a plateau, and that Baku lies beneath it. As the train approaches the town the nostrils are saluted with the unmistakable odour of naphtha. It is a strange-looking place, almost like an American city in some respects, with its broad streets, magnificent quay and modern improvements. But the Persians and Tartars in their picturesque costumes, the camels in the market-place, the Persian citadel, the Keez Kala Tower, and the Russian peasants and soldiers soon dispel the illusion.

My short stay at Baku was rendered pleasant and instructive by the kindness of the French Vice-Consul, M. Dubail, who showed me round, took me over the oil refineries, etc., and introduced me to the notabilities of the town. He told me many entertaining stories of the ineptness of the Russian officials which I duly reproduced.

At last a steamer started for Enzeli, and I embarked for Persia. The Caspian is a fractious choppy little sea and the trip was far from pleasant. I have fully described that journey and its continuation to Resht, a huge bazaar town where I put up at the only hotel in the place, a very primitive establishment kept by a Greek, and almost entirely void of furniture, more like

a prison than a hostelry in fact. The English Consul at that time was the genial Harry Lionel Churchill, who entertained me right hospitably, and did everything that in him lay to facilitate my journey. Wishing to make him some slight return for his great kindness, I invited him and his wife and his very charming mother to dinner at my hotel where, whatever the accommodation might be, the cooking was at least excellent. Before doing so I had a little talk with my Greek host, who knew a few words of Russian, about wine, and especially whether he had any champagne. The Greek shook his head, shrugged his shoulders and pretended not to understand, but signed to me to wait and presently returned with a bottle of Veuve Clicquot, 1874. I was transported. How many bottles did he possess? He told me, three. I immediately bought the lot, and prepared to give the Churchills the surprise of their life. The dinner was a great success, the cook had surpassed himself, and when the Clicquot was produced, my guests made an exclamation of surprise. It was really capital wine, and the first bottle was quickly consumed. The second was now opened and poured out, but oh! how different, it tasted like soda-water and sugar. Indignantly I inspected the bottle and discovered to my dismay that it was Crimean champagne! The third bottle proved to be of the same brand! I upbraided the Greek host, but that honest fellow only shrugged his shoulders, and gave me to understand that he did not know the difference, and that that was all he had. I have not to this day discovered whether it was by accident or design that he had produced the Clicquot first, and reserved his Crimean sickliness for subsequent consumption. He was a Greek. The Churchills had the laugh of me. Through their kindness I was made the guest of the Governor of Talish through whose district I had to pass on my way to Tabriz. This high official gave me an escort of twenty-five mounted men, and put me up at his various residences on the way. At one of these I was introduced to his brother who bore a

ridiculous and striking resemblance to a friend of mine, a distinguished British Admiral, whose name has recently been very much before the public. This Persian aristocrat had a curious shuffling gait, and I asked young George Churchill who was accompanying me, what was the matter with him.

"Oh!" said young Churchill, "he's all right; only he has had a disagreeable experience. He did something that displeased the Shah, and was ordered to be bastinadoed, it was rather a severe punishment, and most of his toes have come off. That's why he walks so uncomfortably."

"Doux pays!" I murmured.

Persia was, in those days at least, still a very primitive country, very little changed from what it must have been like at the dawn of the Christian era, when people talked scandal on the house-tops, walked about with their beds (not four-posters) under their arms, and, if they built their mud-houses on the sand, saw them washed away when the rain descended.

Travelling was always on horse-back, sometimes one encountered litters between two mules, for the accommodation of ladies, but even Mahommedan ladies, although their faces were completely hidden from view, preferred to ride. Commissariat was a difficulty, during part of my journey I had to live on what I could shoot, and sometimes the birds I brought down, especially the bustards, were terribly tough. But my native servant used to retire for some little distance, dig a small pit, light a fire and come back in an incredibly short time, with a succulent dish. It was like conjuring without apparatus.

Some idea of the amenities of travel in Persia in those days may be obtained from the following story Harry Lionel Churchill told me. When Sir Frank Lascelles was appointed to Teheran he was accompanied by his charming French wife. It was Churchill's good fortune to travel with them to the capital. One day, on their journey, which was naturally conducted as comfortably as possible, Lady Lascelles asked Churchill why

the men always insisted on her having the first bath every morning. Churchill explained to her, that, as there was very little water to go round, they thought she would prefer to bathe first, seeing that the same water had to be used over again by all the others.

"But," he added, "I did not tell her that, after it had been used for our baths, the vegetables were cooked in it."

At Tabriz I was put up by Mr. Godfrey Wood, our Consul-General, a bachelor whose Maltese housekeeper could make herself perfectly understood, when speaking her own language, by the natives. Mr. Wood absolutely refused to allow me to proceed to Turkish Armenia and telegraphed to the *Daily Graphic* in my name explaining that he had reason to believe that the Turks would murder me on the way once I got into their territory. In reply I received a peremptory order to return, but decided to do so via Julfa, Etchmiadzin and Erivan, the ancient capital of Armenia. This I did, and I have recorded my experiences of this journey, and how I managed to escape arrest by the Russian police.

I will spare my readers a recapitulation of the details of my return to England via Tiflis, Batoum, Odessa and Kieff, and will content myself with saying that this trip across Persia and Armenia was the most interesting of the many journeys I have ever undertaken.

Perhaps I may be allowed to say a few words about the Armenian massacres. Why were these atrocities committed? We have seen that according to Djemal Pasha the Armenians were regarded with friendly feelings by the Turks until shortly after the Crimean War, and, allowing for exaggeration, this was in the main true. After the Crimean War and during the seventies, as I well remember, the Armenians were treated almost with affection by the Russians, yet in 1894 Russia looked calmly on while these former pets were being massacred. We in this country were divided into two camps, the Conservatives

and the Liberals. The former were pro-Turk, thought it was not our business to interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey; the latter were pro-Russian and believed that if we only supported Russia and gave her a free hand that country would find means of protecting her fellow-Christian, Armenian friends. Indeed Madame de Novikoff wrote letters to the English papers conveying the impression that Russia was sulking and allowing the Armenians to be massacred purely to spite us because of our attitude at the Berlin Conference. There was an air of "*vous l'avez voulu, Georges Dandin,*" about her letters. This was pure camouflage. It was too absurd to suppose that Russia was thus refusing to come to the aid of her own Christian neighbours out of pure pique. If it had been true it would have been a scandal. But the real facts were very different.

The annexation by Russia, after the Russo-Turkish war, of a large slice of Turkish territory inhabited by the Armenians, had turned these Armenians into Russian subjects, and had admitted them to the benefits of the Russian educational system. The result was the rapid growth of an Armenian intelligentsia. These highly educated Armenian youths became impregnated with the political discontent then prevalent, and conceived on the one hand a strong aversion from the autocratic method of government, and on the other hand, translating the aspirations of the Slavophils into terms of Armenian patriotism, began to dream of the formation of an Armenian nation. While many of them joined Russian revolutionary societies, others formed secret Armenian associations of their own which fostered the dream of creating in time an independent Armenian nation. For the realisation of this dream, it was thought well to follow the example of the Bulgarians, and to commence by stirring up rebellion in Turkish Armenia. It was expected that Russia would repeat the mistakes of the past, and assist them in their efforts. But they forgot that, although the Armenian Church has many points of similarity with the Greek Orthodox, it was

nevertheless a totally separate and independent organisation and differed from it materially in several respects. Moreover, the Armenians are a people of a more ancient culture than the Russians, they have a language and literature of their own and they obstinately refused to be assimilated with the Russians. Instead of aiding and abetting the Armenians, the Russian government pursued an opposite policy. As soon as they got wind of what was afoot they warned the Turkish government.

Now, when I was in Tiflis, I came, as I have said, across a party of refugees from Sassun, and by means of interpreters I questioned these unsophisticated peasants for several consecutive days and for two hours at a time, and at last ascertained why the massacres were ordered. These atrocities arose out of the refusal of the Sassun peasants to surrender an agitator, named Murath, in 1893. I subsequently ascertained that this Murath had studied in Geneva, where he had been on terms with certain Russian refugees, and consequently came under the observation of the emissaries of the Russian political police.

Lord Rosebery very wisely stopped the pro-Armenian agitation in England by his famous speech at the St. James's Hall. He told the people that if that agitation was continued it would lead to a European war. I have reason to believe that he was right, and that our friend the German Emperor was preparing a coalition against us. Let me remind my readers of the interview I had in 1894 with a French diplomatist at the Quai d'Orsay, when he told me: "*Vous verrez, au bout de quelques ans il n'y aura plus d'Angleterre.*"

My book pleased nobody, because it suited neither party, but the late Lord Bryce commended it to me.

"You have said as much as you dare," was his opinion.

CHAPTER XV

THE BOER WAR AND SOUTH AFRICA

The encircling policy of Germany having failed, together with the attempt to embroil us with Turkey over the Armenian question, in which I have reason to believe Germany's rôle was not entirely passive, it became necessary to find some other means of weakening the imposing edifice of the British Empire. As it was, our prestige had suffered considerably. We had been credited with the design of creating an Armenian buffer state, but at the mere hint from Lord Rosebery, that any further agitation in favour of the Armenian people might involve us in a war, the whole pro-Armenian campaign was dropped. We had demonstrated to the world that we could talk grandiloquently about turning the Turk, bag and baggage, out of Europe, but that when it came to action there was, to use an American phrase, "nothing doing." Thus we had exhibited ourselves in the eyes of Europe, to use another American phrase, as "hot-air merchants." Foreigners have been as little able to understand the mentality of the British people as we have been of understanding foreigners, although we, at least, try very hard.

In order to break up the British Empire it is necessary to bring about its disintegration. The most promising quarter in which this process of disintegration could be commenced appeared to be South Africa. Thanks to Mr. Gladstone and Majuba Hill (a disgraceful episode of which a South African cousin told me the full details—we were caught napping, and the Boers were as much surprised as we), the ground appeared to be sufficiently well prepared. How annoying it must have been to our good friends to find that their efforts to undermine

us in South Africa only served to consolidate the empire. We are such a funny people!

One day I was walking through St. James's Park when I met my old friend, General Grahame.

"Stupid business, this silly raid of Jameson's," he exclaimed. "I have just been seeing my cousin at the Colonial Office where they are all furious. The infernal ass has upset the whole apple-cart. If the Boers had hanged a few of those damned Johannesburg Jews it would have been a jolly good riddance, and we should have had a clear case against the Boers, but now this bally fool goes and falls into a trap, is duped by a bogus telegram, and puts us in the wrong."

I do not know how far this speech accurately reproduced the Colonial Office's mental attitude towards the Jameson Raid, but the point of view had certainly not been invented by honest General Grahame, he had not had time.

Whichever way that raid is looked at, it was a mighty inconvenient thing for us, and it gave Holstein, at the German Foreign Office, an opportunity for cleverly exploiting the notorious indiscreet impulsiveness of the German Emperor by making him sign a despatch to Kruger which was another nail in the coffin of the traditional friendship of England and Germany.

Just after the outbreak of the war which inevitably followed, Mr., later Sir, Arthur Pearson, conceived the idea of starting a friendly rival to the *Daily Mail*, for which he hit upon the title of the *Daily Express*. He explained to me that the *Daily Mail* had attained a circulation of a million copies a day. If he could sell only a hundred thousand of his paper he would be quite content, and it would not affect his friend "Alfred" (Harmsworth) at all.

The occasion for this confidence was a proposal that I should go out to South Africa as War Correspondent for the new journal. I explained to the trusting Mr. Pearson that I had no

knowledge of warfare and that my past experience was calculated to make me more useful in the domain of foreign affairs than as a war correspondent, but Mr. Pearson insisted and I, nothing loth, accepted. He asked me down to his place at Farnborough, where he had a stud and was selling off his horses, and where he would introduce me to my colleagues. He told me that when he was a young man earning thirty-five shillings a week in the service of the late Sir George Newnes, he was bicycling one day round Farnborough and, coming across the place he now occupied, formed the resolve to purchase it when he had made his way in the world. The wish had been realised rather sooner than he expected.

At Farnborough I met, among others, the late Mr. Fletcher Robinson, who was a nephew of Sir John Robinson of the *Daily News*, and cast for the part of Arthur Brisbane to Mr. Pearson's Pulitzer. It is a melancholy coincidence that both Pulitzer and Pearson were overtaken with blindness.

Fletcher Robinson was a very tall, broad-shouldered, fair-haired giant, who had been a great athlete at Cambridge, but had the voice of a child, and moreover spoke with an infantile lisp. Pearson wanted him to select a horse for his father, but Fletcher Robinson, after inspecting the horses which were brought separately into the riding school, assured Pearson that there was not one amongst them able to carry his father's weight. He described his parent as a very powerful man riding eighteen stone.

It was arranged that we should all go by the *Dunnottar Castle* which was taking the Duke of Cambridge's Own Yeomanry.

As our train reached Southampton, Fletcher Robinson explained to me that his parents had invited him to lunch at the Southampton Hotel, would I therefore mind taking charge of his luggage while he got out, promising to join the boat later. Of course I willingly assented, and got Fletcher Robinson's kit stowed in his cabin. I then went on deck and was greatly

amused by the appearance of a quaint old couple who looked as though they had walked out of one of Dickens's novels. The lady wore an old-fashioned black silk bonnet, the man had a curiously shaped cap. They were both very short, wizened and feeble. Presently the old man came up to me and asked me in a faltering voice whether Mr. Fletcher Robinson was on board. I explained to him that Mr. Fletcher Robinson was at the Southampton Hotel lunching with his parents, whereat the couple chirped out in chorus: "But we are his parents!"

I could not believe my senses. Was this little old man indeed the powerful father who rode eighteen stone?

The departure was a wonderful scene. The band played "Tommy Atkins," a very popular song at that time, and Rudyard Kipling's famous "Absent-minded Beggar"; the people, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, who had come to see the men off, waved their handkerchiefs and cheered. Though many of those fine fellows might never come back, there was not a melancholy face on the quay. Not a tear was shed. It was all splendid and jolly, a magnificent exhibition of British pluck.

I could not help contrasting this scene with a similar one that I had witnessed in Moscow during the Russo-Turkish War, when I went to see a young guardsman off. His parents also came, and the platform was crowded with relations of the troops from every class of society. When the train, filled with men for the front, was about to start, the band struck up a jolly tune, "Slavsya," full of brightness and movement, but the merry strains of this cheerful music struck a jarring note, nerves gave way, and everybody burst into tears, several ladies fainted, including my friend's mother, and as the train steamed out of the station, that horrid band still cynically playing its joyous tunes, all the men were weeping. One felt as though they were being taken like sheep to the slaughter, and that they were all conscious of their doom, and yet the Russo-Turkish War was a popular war, a people's war in fact.

We were a cheery party on board the Castle liner, amongst whom the most distinguished was undoubtedly the beautiful Lady Airlie who was going to join her gallant husband; with her were the Earl and Countess of Scarborough. These with their friends formed what we called the vice-regal party. The county party, who kept very much to themselves, consisted of Lady Gerrard and her sister and a few others. Then there was Sir Francis Burdett, always perfectly groomed, the wife of a Rand magnate who had been a Gaiety girl, in short there was plenty of variety. Fletcher Robinson assured us that before the voyage was over he would be on speaking terms with all of them, and very amusing it was to watch his manœuvres and to observe the snubs he got, but he was a born journalist and persevered.

As for myself, I foregathered with Captain, now Admiral, Bayly and a charming retired old colonel, who was going out just to see the fun. He had served in many corners of the world, and was a very delightful companion. At Cape Town my colleagues and I put up at Peel's Hotel, much to the relief of Fletcher Robinson, who wanted to have the "swells" to himself at the Mount Nelson where the dear old colonel also put up. Some days later, when I had occasion to visit the Mount Nelson, I came across the colonel in the lounge, and asked him how he liked Cape Town.

"Oh! very much," he replied. "As a matter of fact I have not stirred out of the grounds of this very pleasant hotel, since I arrived here."

A short time afterwards he took a trip to Kimberley, and on his return, when I tried to elicit from him what that town was like, he only said drily:

"Oh! very nice place. Excellent hotel!"

And so this dear old boy kept moving about, sampling hotels, enjoying himself, and thinking he was seeing South Africa.

Cape Town has been fully described so often that I will

spare my readers my own impression of it. What fascinated me most was the tramway line along the sea-front to Weinberg, Rondebusch, and beyond, and the wonderful villas which one passed. The names of these villas interested me especially. Thus one was called "Bewleigh" (for Beaulieu, I suppose), another boastfully bore the inscription "Bonavista," whilst the more humorous or cynical owner of the next had modestly labelled his villa "Nullavista."

The Malays were of course a picturesque feature of the port, their costumes were so bright, and the younger women quite extraordinarily beautiful. It is strange that they should lose their looks so soon and develop into such absolutely forbidding and hideous hags!

Walking through the native quarter of the town one day, my eye was attracted by a curious lot of gaudily coloured bills exhibited in the window of a not over-clean-looking house. As I crossed over to examine these announcements, an evil-looking old Hecate beckoned me to come in. It was a fortune-telling establishment. Having nothing to do, I entered and had my fortune told. The evil-eyed old woman was not a flattering prophet. She predicted that I would be robbed, that I would be at death's door but that I would get back to England and after a time be much better off than I had ever been before. All these prophecies literally came true. This was the only occasion on which a soothsayer had been correct in telling me my fortune. Years ago my fate was foretold me from the lines on my hand, and the charming lady who read my future for me, condemned me to death at the age of thirty, she then described many journeys in my hand, unhappy love affairs and adventures, but she wound up by saying: "By the time you are about forty you will get married and live happily ever afterwards."

At last, after a long and monotonous wait, I got my permit to proceed to Bloemfontein, where Lord Roberts was preparing his advance to Pretoria. On my arrival I met an officious

brother journalist whom I had known in London and who disliked me.

"What! you here!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?

"I am here for the *Daily Express*," I answered.

"Monstrous!" he said. "Why, the *Daily Express* is not published yet. You have no business to be here."

"I don't think that is any affair of yours," I retorted.

He growled something *sotto voce* and went on.

In due course I reported myself to my chief, the press censor, Lord Stanley, now the Earl of Derby, who was seated inside a funny-looking box, his usually amiable face clouded and angry.

"I am informed," he said, "that you are representing a paper that is not yet published."

I could not help laughing as I admitted the charge.

"You seem to be amused," he remarked sternly.

"Well," I replied, "it does seem to be rather an *opéra-bouffe* position."

"You have no business to be here. I shall send you back."

I explained that I thought the position had been made quite clear, otherwise surely I would not have been granted a permit to come out, and I represented that, as the *Daily Express* might be published any day, it was imperative that it should have a correspondent on the spot. He looked at me very sternly, then I could see that his good nature was beginning to prevail.

"I will think it over," he said. "Meanwhile I shall allow you to remain here a week."

I knew I had won. It would have been unreasonable to have sent me back after keeping me for a week at Bloemfontein living at famine prices, so I thanked him very profusely and ever afterwards I experienced nothing but the greatest kindness and consideration from this most genial and efficient of press censors.

At Bloemfontein I met a lot of old friends and made a great many new ones, chief among whom was that eccentric American genius Julian Ralph, who spent most of his days singing, "My Ragtime Girl," concerning the history and origin of which classical ditty he had numerous learned and recondite theories. It was really delightful to hear him expound his researches regarding this "literary gem," and talk about it as though it were a sort of American Arthurian legend.

I was glad to meet Melton Prior and Bennett Burleigh, two Nestors among war correspondents, although the former was in a furious temper. Bobbie Beresford and his young cousin, Grahame, had stolen Melton Prior's cape-cart one evening and painted it a bright lurid red, and great was his wrath thereat. Winston Churchill joined the party a few days later, looking very glum and indignant because Sir Redvers Buller and he had had a "tiff." With his usual restless energy he set about finding some occupation, and organised cricket matches for the men, a very excellent idea.

One of the sights of Bloemfontein was the barber's shop kept by a Polish Jew. It was the only barber's shop in the place and catered for an army of 40,000 men. From morning till night it was crammed with customers, sitting on rush-bottomed chairs waiting their turn. No more democratic institution could be imagined. Here were general officers cheek by jowl with Tommies, all waiting to be shaved. One day I met General Sir Hector Macdonald there, his strikingly handsome face with its wonderful complexion somewhat disfigured by a fortnight's growth. He was immovably sitting at the end of a long line of private soldiers quietly biding his time. The Polish Jew also undertook to grind and set razors, but as it was physically impossible for him to find a free moment for the accomplishment of this arduous work, he hit upon a very simple expedient. He had two drawers in his dressing-table, into one of these he placed the razors handed to him, and when that was full he

took them out and placed them in the other drawer, when that was full he returned the razors to their owners, and for this simple operation he charged one shilling and ninepence. He must have coined money, but at least he did not injure the razors, which were all the better for their rest. I learned subsequently that this honest fellow made the, to him, physically painful acquaintance of the provost-marshal, and after a sound castigation, was expelled the town. These are the little tragedies incidental to war.

One day I met Conan Doyle in the street. He told me he was running a hospital and asked me whether I would help him in a matter of some delicacy. He had a patient whom he suspected of malingering. This patient complained of severe pains in his back which prevented him from moving, and he lay all day, stretched on his bed, moaning most pitifully, yet when he was told that somebody had stolen his slippers he nipped out most nimbly to look for them.

"Would you mind being a specialist for once, and coming round to the hospital? Perhaps you could frighten this fellow back to health."

Next morning I duly turned up at the hospital, which was beautifully kept, and Conan Doyle took me to see the alleged malingerer. He was lying on his bed, a pitiful object, moaning dolefully.

Conan Doyle told him I was a great surgeon who had come to see whether I could not relieve him of his pain. I put on a solemn bed-side manner, and after asking him a few questions turned to Conan Doyle and said mournfully:

"It is as I feared from what you told me. There is only one thing that can save him, and that is the operation I spoke to you about. But it is a very dangerous operation, ninety-nine per cent. of the patients die from it, and I would not consent to perform it unless the man fully authorises me to do so. It is a very serious thing, touch and go, but it is worth trying, and it

is, I am convinced, the only thing to save this man's life if it should fortunately be successful."

At these words the poor fellow moaned more than ever, crying: "I might as well have been killed at once by the Boers."

However, it was agreed that the operation should be performed the next day, the operating table got ready, and I especially insisted that particular attention should be paid to the man's diet.

Next day I again met Conan Doyle, who told me my visit had acted like a charm, and had worked a most remarkable cure. The patient had been that morning discharged at his own request, the pains in his back having suddenly left him.

I may here relate my interview with Lord Kitchener to whom a friend, who had known him intimately as a young man in Cyprus, had given me a letter of introduction. Kitchener's residence was guarded by a sentry who told me to walk straight in. It was late in the afternoon, I passed through a couple of swing doors, and found myself in a long passage, at the end of that passage I opened another door, and there before me I saw, seated at a big table, smoking a cigarette in a long bamboo holder, a bottle of Bass beside him, and a forage cap on his head, the familiar features of the hero of Omdurman. He was dictating to an aide-de-camp, who immediately jumped up, ran to the door, and asked me what I wanted.

"Is Lord Kitchener in?" I inquired. "I have a letter of introduction to him. Would you be so good as to give it him, and to ask him whether he can see me?"

With these words I handed my letter of introduction to the aide-de-camp, and retired into the passage, carefully closing the door. I had never been so surprised in my life, but rapidly took in the situation. Had I gone straight up to Lord Kitchener, he might conceivably, and very justifiably, have resented my inadvertent intrusion, besides he might have been engaged on some important despatches and not disposed to waste any time on me.

Within a few seconds the young aide-de-camp came out to fetch me. Lord Kitchener would see me.

At first he was rather cynical and contemptuous of my profession.

"Of course," he said, "nobody cares a damn what's written about him in the press."

This from the best-advertised general who had ever lived, Skobelev and Napoleon perhaps alone excepted, struck me as pretty strong, so I talked about poor G. W. Steevens, whom I had known when he was on the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the splendid days of Henry Cust's editorship, and who had done so much to popularise Kitchener. Poor Steevens had died of fever at Ladysmith. Julian Ralph used to affirm that when Lord Northcliffe heard of his death, he exclaimed:

"I shall take damned good care not to have another Steevens on my staff."

It was indeed inconvenient to have a man of his outstanding ability on the *Daily Mail*, for he automatically set up a standard of excellence which it was difficult to maintain. While he was on the paper it had to be a literary production, and was.

When Harmsworth started the *Daily Mail* Newnes followed with the short-lived *Daily Courant*, of which people used to say, that while Harmsworth had started the *Daily Mail*, Newnes had brought out the *Daily Female*.

But to return to Kitchener. The mention of Steevens visibly softened him, the better side of his nature seemed to be awakened. I then talked of Steevens's wonderful style, how he had modelled it on Rudyard Kipling's as adopted in *e.g. Plain Tales from the Hills*, and how Kipling had been greatly influenced by Bret Harte, who, in turn, had told me that he had aimed at imitating Turgeniev. We thus, to Kitchener's evident amusement and delight, drifted into a literary discussion in the heart of an armed camp, and on the eve as it were, of the march to Pretoria. Never once did I allude to the war, or the

military operations, for I knew full well that even if I were to succeed in getting him to talk on this subject, the press censor would never allow me to cable the information thus obtained.

We had really a very pleasant chat, and when the time came to close the interview, Lord Kitchener drew himself up to his full, towering height, which his thin figure accentuated, bent his head benevolently over me, and said:

"If I can ever be of any service to you, pray command me." This from the Chief of the Staff of the British Army was overwhelming!

In spite of the attractions of Bloemfontein and the amateur dramatic performance of the Guards, at which Barrington Foote was inimitable, especially in his sketch of a fashionable lady doing up her hair, life got very monotonous, I was therefore delighted when I heard there was going to be a "scrap." The water supply of the town was served from a place called Loewfontein, which had remained in the occupation of the Boers, and Lord Roberts had decided to drive them out of this, before commencing his advance in force. Lt.-General Sir Reginald Pole-Carew was consequently ordered to clear the place with the Guards.

Early one morning I therefore proceeded on horseback in the direction of the Loewfontein Waterworks accompanied by my cape-cart with provisions, which was in charge of my negro servant. As I rode across the veldt I could hear the guns booming in the distance and held my course in the direction from whence the sound proceeded. Very soon I was able to descry in the distance a British battery stationed on a rising ground. It was beautiful to see the men serving the guns as though on parade. But as we got nearer my horse became nervous, and began to shiver, so I dismounted, and the animal pathetically placed its head on my shoulder. I gently led it along to a boulder on which two young staff officers were sitting, from whom I endeavoured

to collect a little information. One was a shy, taciturn and very quiet-looking young fellow, the other, much taller, and very slim, was vibrant with energy.

I asked this brilliant young officer to tell me what was going on, explaining that I was only a poor ignorant war correspondent. He pointed to a kopje, about three-quarters of a mile off, looking for all the world like a hay-stack in a field.

"There," he said, "the enemy are holding that kopje and our firing line is just in front of it. Would you like to go there?"

"I think I'd better," I answered.

The two officers looked at each other.

"What do you say?" said the energetic officer.

"I don't mind if I do, Bend Or," said the other.

"All right!" the younger man exclaimed. "We'll all go, and let's mount, but don't let's ride too close together. We must scatter, or we shall afford them too good a target."

No sooner said than done. Off we went, galloping hell-for-leather across the open veldt, the bullets very soon beginning to whiz past us right and left. In my inexperience, for this was the first time I had ever been in an action of any sort, I fully enjoyed myself. There was something stimulating and exhilarating in the air, and it never even entered my mind that one of those bullets might hit me. I was too much of a novice to think of that. As we thus dashed across the veldt I saw, comfortably tucked up in a donga, prudently out of danger, a group of war correspondents with their note-books, amongst them the man who had tried to get me sent back by Lord Stanley. He gave me a malignant and envious glance, for he was a bad horseman. When he had learned that Lord Stanley had decided to let me remain, he asked whether I could ride, and I had deprecatingly answered him that I was afraid I was rather out of practice, whereat he had replied that he had ridden ever since he had been a small boy. But a colleague of his informed me that when he first took to war

corresponding, his editor made him take shilling rides on Hampstead Heath to accustom him to the unwonted exercise.

Arrived at the firing line, the younger officer asked me whether I would care to have a drink, and offered me a whisky bottle out of which I had a good pull, for I was parched. I remember that drink still. He then proceeded to offer drinks to the wounded, of whom there were a goodly number, and to cheer them up. I saw several men hit whilst I was standing amongst them. It was a sickly sight. There was a cheery young officer in charge of a machine gun.

"Well, how are you getting on?" I inquired of him.

"I have been peppering that kopje for the last three hours. I hope I've killed a few Boers, but I have not set eyes on a solitary damned one."

It was soon discovered that the enemy had evacuated the kopje and had fled. The battle was over.

The younger of the two staff officers now said to me:

"We had better get back, or it will grow dark and we shall get lost." He was wise, as I afterwards discovered to my cost. My cape-cart had been left behind, and I was anxious to find it.

"Oh! let the cape-cart rip. Better come along with us. We must be off or we shall catch it from 'old Bobs.' It would never do for two dukes to get lost."

"What! Two dukes?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," said the young officer who had been called "Bend Or," "I am the Duke of Westminster."

"And I," said the other, with a languid drawl, "am the Duke of Marlborough."

I had ridden into action with two dukes!

"I say," said the Duke of Westminster, "do you know Gwynne?"

Now Gwynne who has since become the editor of the *Morning Post*, was then acting for Reuter's. I had met him several times

and knew that he fully deserved the general popularity he enjoyed.

"Will you give him this note?" And the Duke of Westminster scribbled on a sheet in my note-book the following words:

My dear Gwynne. Thanks for your tip. I have had three pots at brother Boer.

Yours ever,
WESTMINSTER.

And then the two dukes rode away and I proceeded to look for my cape-cart which Sir Reginald Pole Carew had paid me the compliment of commandeering, and which was only returned to me after about a week. In my fruitless search I not only lost my way but also my bearings. One sight, which I saw in the darkness (there is no twilight in South Africa), I shall never forget, it was the splendid apparition of our composite regiment of Life-Guards, riding magnificently over the kopjes, their spectral figures silhouetted against the dark skies. They rode along, perfectly noiselessly, like a procession of ghosts. It was a most impressive spectacle, suggestive of fairyland.

I had to spend the night on the veldt, with my horse for my companion. With the dawn I found my way back to Bloemfontein quite easily, and later in the club I came across the genial Duke of Westminster, and stood him a drink in return for the one he had given me.

People looked very funny at the front. We all had to wear khaki, soldiers and civilians alike. Some looked very smart, like Mr. Burdett-Coutts for instance, always splendidly mounted, and rather conspicuous by reason of his American seat. But one day I came across a fearful-looking ruffian, in the worst khaki turn-out I have ever seen, with a ragged red beard of six weeks' growth, altogether an appallingly disreputable person. He stopped me, and expressed surprise at my not recognising him. It was Sir Francis Burdett, the immaculately groomed, the exquisitely turned-out. No wonder I did not recognise him.

One day there arrived Basil Gotto, the sculptor, whom Fletcher Robinson had appointed assistant to me. He was accompanied by an individual whom he called his servant, and who was evidently a little nervous of me, for he avoided my gaze as much as he could, but as soon as he opened his mouth, and said a few words in reply to Gotto, I instantly recognised him. I had known him ever since I had first come to London. He was a man of considerable means who had come out in his yacht but had failed to get a job of any sort, and so was passing himself off as Gotto's servant in order to see some of the fun. He had succeeded in smuggling through several cases filled with champagne and similar "medical comforts," and it is needless to say that he and Gotto very soon became very great favourites, especially as they were both the best of good fellows. Not long did they remain at Bloemfontein, however. They soon went off on some wild-goose chase or other, and I lost sight of them.

There was one man who dominated Bloemfontein. Kitchener was scarcely ever seen, but Lord Roberts seemed to be ubiquitous. In spite of his advanced age, he was as active and agile as a kitten, a wonderful horseman and an all-embracing mind. While he did not lose himself in detail, nothing seemed to be too paltry for his attention. Moreover he was such a statesman, such a consummate leader of men. He found a place for everybody, and made his subordinates responsible for their jobs. Wherever he went, his penetrating grey eyes seemed to take in everything and everybody. No detail escaped him. The men simply worshipped him. It is to be regretted that Lady Roberts had no share in this popularity and was as cordially disliked as he was loved. Roberts never used bad language. That is more than can be said of his subordinates. One general, in particular, who commanded the vanguard and outposts, was notorious for his command of expletives. A newly joined subaltern was appointed to join him as aide-de-camp, and, after

a jolly dinner at the club, started out in the dark to ride to his new post. It so happened that the general, a short and fiery blasphemer, was also dining at Bloemfontein that evening, and that the two met without knowing each other. They got into conversation, and were riding along quite happily, when the general suddenly broke out. The pace was too slow for him, and he began to curse and swear at his companion and asked why he did not go any faster.

"Because my —— horse —— well can't. He has —— gone —— lame."

The general was surprised to be paid back in his own coin. "Who the hell are you?" he inquired.

"What —— business is that of yours?" was the rejoinder.

Infuriated, the general put spurs to his horse, and galloped off, swearing and nearly exploding all the way.

The next morning the newly appointed aide-de-camp presented himself to his chief, and the two instantly recognised each other as the companions of the night before. The aide-de-camp felt very nervous, but, to his great surprise, the general greeted him most cordially, simply remarking, very genially, "I think we have met before."

He had conceived a great admiration and respect for a young officer who possessed so copious a vocabulary.

We were all glad when the great advance began, and the lazy life at Bloemfontein came to an end. Unfortunately for me, I was far from well, and suffered from terrible pains in my back which made it difficult for me to sit my horse. At Brandtford I had to lie down, when a colleague insisted on getting a doctor to see me, who immediately pronounced that I was much too ill to go on, that I probably had enteric. At this moment Lord Stanley came in to see me. He was kindness itself.

"I can't let you go on," he said, "you must be sent back to hospital. But I will tell you what I will do. I will let

you appoint a substitute, and shall look after him, so that your paper does not suffer."

I was deeply grateful. A young Swedish officer, de Klein by name, a guardsman, who was acting as a sort of military attaché, had chummed up with me, and him I appointed my substitute. As he was a professional soldier the *Daily Express* gained by the exchange, and I felt considerably relieved, though my disappointment was great. I had been so looking forward to entering Johannesburg and Pretoria.

There were several military attachés with the army, amongst them a Russian colonel whose name I have forgotten, but who was a very interesting man. He told me that it was all nonsense to imagine, as some people did, that the experience of this war would have the effect of altering military tactics.

"These Boers," he said, "are not soldiers. They fight and run away. In a European war, troops will have to hold their ground. It will be quite a different thing." He was right.

Another Russian officer I met at Cape Town. He was then a simple captain who had been with Cronje and captured with his staff. That was Gourko, who afterwards became a famous commander in the great war. He had lost his kit and had nothing but the uniform he stood up in, and yet he always looked neat and smart. I met him one day in Peel's Hotel when he spoke to me, and I very much surprised him by answering him in Russian.

I now had to work my way back to Bloemfontein. It was a terrible journey. For the best part of a day I had to lie on a station platform half way towards my destination, waiting for a train, and when it arrived, loaded with wounded, I had to lie on a sack of potatoes in a goods truck, a very painful experience. But lots of wounded were in a worse plight than I. We arrived at Bloemfontein in the night, and I was carried on a stretcher to hospital, the famous No. 9, which was subsequently condemned for being insanitary. As my huge frame was being

carried across the veldt by staggering puny stretcher-bearers, I could not help laughing at their ludicrous efforts.

"You are a cheery patient," said Major Yarr[1] of the Guards, who was the doctor in charge, and who from that moment took a special interest in me. He certainly saved my life.

I was placed on a camp bed in a huge marquee tent, and here I remained for six very happy weeks. We were a jolly lot, and bore our misfortunes cheerfully. At first I was in great agony and after the crisis I had great difficulty in keeping still, though I knew that to move was to court death. One night I could not bear it any longer, and was on the point of jumping out of bed, when a kind good nurse came and sponged me all over and I was able to go to sleep. Major Yarr came in later and gave me some milk which he had aerated by means of one of those cartridges they used to supply with special bottles, and after that I steadily improved. One day they brought in a magnificent Highlander, one of the finest specimens of humanity I had ever seen. The day following a screen was placed round his bed, he had died in the night, and his body was taken out to be buried shortly afterwards. A very amusing patient was a major of mounted infantry who was full of quips and cranks. He was very much concerned at having been without a bath for so long and used to complain that his feet were scaly. He and I kept the ball rolling, and had lots of jokes and fun together although he was at the opposite end of the tent. Next to him was a young guardsman, Lord Oxmantown, quite a boy, very well behaved, who was obviously very much shocked at the flippant and unconventional talk of the gallant major. At night the water used to freeze in our ewers, whilst at noon the sun was quite hot. I spent six weeks in this tent. We were very well looked after in spite of Mr. Burdett-Coutts's criticisms. On the Queen's birthday Major Yarr even got us some champagne

[1] Now Major-General Sir Michael Thomas Yarr, K.C.M.G., C.B., F.R.C.S.I., Officer of the Legion of Honour, &c., &c., &c.

with which to drink her health. There was a very amusing scandal whilst I was in hospital. A doctor had shot a springbok and sent it to the doctors' mess at No. 9. They gave it to their cook, who hung it up. The nurses got wind of this and succeeded in stealing the springbok in the night. Great was the rage of the doctors when they found their springbok missing, but greater still when the nurses, with their compliments, sent them some portions of roasted springbok which they said they had found hanging outside their tent that morning. There was even an inquiry, but it was found impossible to trace the thief or fasten the guilt on anybody.

In due course I got well and was invalided home, where I found Mr. Burdett-Coutts was trying to emulate the late Sir William Russell who, as *The Times* correspondent in the Crimean War (the first British War Correspondent, not the first war correspondent; that, according to a friend of mine, now also gone over to join the great majority, was Xenophon), exposed the disgraceful condition of Scutari Hospital. The Bloemfontein hospitals were extemporised and probably left a good deal to be desired, but they were excellently managed and I at least, though not much of a Mark Tapley, I fear, could find no cause for grumbling, nor did I hear of any complaint from others. We all knew that we were not on a picnic, and did not expect to be fed on ortolans.

If Mr. Burdett-Coutts had directed his criticism towards the staff work, he would have been better justified, as I subsequently showed in an article in a scientific journal, which had the honour of being reprinted in *The Times*. Enteric fever had been known to be an epidemic in Bloemfontein for years, in fact ever since the introduction of what the unconsciously humorous burghers were pleased to call its "sanitary system." To camp an army of 40,000 men in a fever trap was worse than stupid, it was criminal. In that article I insisted on the importance of equipping all field armies with refuse destructors, and of burning

all refuse. An eminent engineer informed me that this suggestion of mine bore fruit and was adopted during the last war, one of the factors which contributed to the immunity of our troops from epidemics in the various theatres of war.

Before closing this chapter of my life I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration for the splendid way in which our much maligned War Office ran that South Africa show. It certainly opened the eyes of our neighbours, and enormously increased their respect for us.

I often wonder whether people realise what the Boer War meant for us, and how very near we were to losing South Africa altogether. Fortunately for us, the Boers had the comfortable habit of returning to their farms after a battle. Had they been able to follow up their early victories before we had any forces worth speaking of to stem their advance, the war might have ended very differently. As it was, it was a case of stalemate. Just before I went out a Dutch barber, whose occasional customer I was, told me that we would find the Boers tough customers to tackle, as indeed we discovered them to be.

"And," he added, "after de regular var der will come de gorilla var, and dat vill be very difficult."

As it turned out, he was quite right. It was the "gorilla" war which proved the hardest job, but whether the system of blockhouses, by means of which De Wet was afforded a number of weak isolated objectives on which to concentrate his mobile forces, was the best way of solving the problem I leave military experts to decide.

Our passage home was uneventful, despite the presence on board of the mercurial Lord De La Warr, who kept us all amused. There was a party of inveterate bridge-players with us who played their favourite game all day throughout the voyage. A very pleasant and popular young officer scored for them, and I noticed that while he was a universal favourite when we started, by the time we had sighted

Southampton he was barely on speaking terms with any of the players.

A very interesting passenger was a certain Dr. Boswell, a kinsman of the famous biographer of Dr. Johnson. He had fitted out and run a hospital train at his own expense, but now that the big fight was over he was returning. Possessed of a vast store of varied information, his conversation was a perpetual entertainment. How he helped a man to cure his wife from drink by presenting him with a cane, was really screamingly funny.

Another doctor on board, a shy and retiring young man of the name of Nathan, also had a fund of amusing stories, after Dr. Boswell and I had successfully broken the ice. He had allotted him a very remarkable servant, who looked after his creature comforts with praiseworthy zeal, but whose methods of obtaining supplies were less exemplary. When he first presented himself, he thought it well to apprise Dr. Nathan of his importance.

"You don't know me, I suppose, in this 'ere kit, Guv'nor. I'm Chicks, the Whitechapel Champion. What! Never 'eard o' me! Why, all the world knows me. Well, I'm ——!"

Such is fame!

A year or two after my return to London I was offered and accepted a post in the City, and thus my journalistic career was brought to a close, but I speedily discovered that business was just as full of interest and amusement as any other career. Perhaps in course of time, if this, my first venture at "reminiscing," should warrant it, I may record my experiences of "world trade."

THE END

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